



Sen. Thomas Cullerton

Filed: 10/19/2021

10200HB0359sam001

LRB102 11611 KTG 30025 a

1 AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 359

2 AMENDMENT NO. _____. Amend House Bill 359 by replacing
3 everything after the enacting clause with the following:

4 "Section 5. The Department of Veterans' Affairs Act is
5 amended by adding Section 39 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2805/39 new)

7 Sec. 39. Veterans' Accountability Unit.

8 (a) The Department shall create a Veterans' Accountability
9 Unit which shall receive complaints and recommendations from:
10 (i) veterans and other Illinois residents who seek services
11 from the Department; (ii) residents of Veterans' Homes, their
12 families, and visitors; (iii) vendors and contractors of the
13 Department; and (iv) staff of the Department.

14 (b) The Governor shall appoint, and the Senate shall
15 confirm, the Director of the Veterans' Accountability Unit.
16 The Director shall be appointed for a term of 4 years.

1 (c) The Director of the Veterans' Accountability Unit
2 shall ensure that the Unit maintains regular office hours and
3 establishes both a toll-free helpline and a dedicated
4 electronic mail address for the purpose of accepting
5 complaints, information, and recommendations. The Director
6 shall provide a reasonable means for receiving complaints
7 outside of office hours.

8 (d) The Veterans' Accountability Unit shall function
9 independently of the Department. The salary and benefits of
10 the Director of the Veterans' Accountability Unit and any
11 other staff of the Unit, as deemed necessary by the Director,
12 along with all other expenses of the Unit shall be paid from
13 appropriations to the Department.

14 (e) The Director and staff of the Veterans' Accountability
15 Unit shall have the authority to access the offices or
16 facilities of the Department and the Veterans' Homes and shall
17 have access to all information, documents, and personnel of
18 the Department as needed to perform the duties of the
19 Veterans' Accountability Unit. It is the duty of every
20 employee of the Department to cooperate with the Veterans'
21 Accountability Unit. The Department shall provide the staff of
22 the Veterans' Accountability Unit with physical space in each
23 Department office and in each Veterans' Home to conduct
24 confidential business as needed to perform the work of the
25 Veterans' Accountability Unit.

26 (f) The Veterans' Accountability Unit shall ensure all

1 complaints, allegations, or incidents of possible misconduct,
2 misfeasance, malfeasance, or violations of rules, procedures,
3 or laws by any employee, service provider, or contractor of
4 the Department are reported to the Office of Executive
5 Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor.

6 (g) The Office of Executive Inspector General for the
7 Agencies of the Illinois Governor shall assess the complaints,
8 allegations, and incidents and shall determine whether to (i)
9 investigate, (ii) refer to the appropriate agency, (iii) refer
10 to any appropriate law enforcement agency, (iv) request a
11 response from the Department to the complaint, allegations, or
12 incident, or (v) refer to the Veterans' Accountability Unit to
13 conduct further inquiry or review if necessary.

14 (h) The Director of the Veterans' Accountability Unit may
15 recommend changes to the Director of Veterans' Affairs
16 concerning Department policies or practices based upon
17 information learned or observations made by the Veterans'
18 Accountability Unit staff during the course of its duties. The
19 Director of the Veterans' Accountability Unit shall meet
20 regularly with the Office of Executive Inspector General for
21 the Agencies of the Illinois Governor to report this
22 information to allow the Office to determine whether further
23 investigation is necessary.

24 (i) The Veterans' Accountability Unit shall create an
25 annual report that includes a summary of the complaints
26 received and actions taken in response. This report shall not

1 include any referrals to the Office of Executive Inspector
2 General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor that result
3 in an investigation. The summaries shall not contain any
4 confidential or identifying information concerning the
5 subjects or complainants of the reports and investigations.

6 (j) Nothing in this Section shall limit investigations by
7 the Department of Veterans' Affairs that may otherwise be
8 required by law or that may be necessary in that Department's
9 capacity as the central administrative authority on matters
10 concerning services to veterans, their survivors, and
11 dependents."