

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Department of Veterans Affairs Act is  
5 amended by changing Section 2 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2805/2) (from Ch. 126 1/2, par. 67)

7 Sec. 2. Powers and duties. The Department shall have the  
8 following powers and duties:

9 To perform such acts at the request of any veteran, or his  
10 or her spouse, surviving spouse or dependents as shall be  
11 reasonably necessary or reasonably incident to obtaining or  
12 endeavoring to obtain for the requester any advantage, benefit  
13 or emolument accruing or due to such person under any law of  
14 the United States, the State of Illinois or any other state or  
15 governmental agency by reason of the service of such veteran,  
16 and in pursuance thereof shall:

17 (1) ~~1.~~ Contact veterans, their survivors and  
18 dependents and advise them of the benefits of state and  
19 federal laws and assist them in obtaining such benefits;

20 (2) ~~2.~~ Establish field offices and direct the  
21 activities of the personnel assigned to such offices;

22 (3) ~~3.~~ Create a volunteer field force of accredited  
23 representatives, representing educational institutions,  
24 labor organizations, veterans organizations, employers,  
25 churches, and farm organizations;

26 (4) ~~4.~~ Conduct informational and training services;

27 (5) ~~5.~~ Conduct educational programs through  
28 newspapers, periodicals and radio for the specific purpose  
29 of disseminating information affecting veterans and their  
30 dependents;

31 (6) ~~6.~~ Coordinate the services and activities of all  
32 state departments having services and resources affecting

1 veterans and their dependents;

2 (7) ~~7.~~ Encourage and assist in the coordination of  
3 agencies within counties giving service to veterans and  
4 their dependents;

5 (8) ~~8.~~ Cooperate with veterans organizations and other  
6 governmental agencies;

7 (9) ~~9.~~ Make, alter, amend and promulgate reasonable  
8 rules and procedures for the administration of this Act;

9 (10) ~~10.~~ Make and publish annual reports to the  
10 Governor regarding the administration and general  
11 operation of the Department; ~~and~~

12 (11) ~~11.~~ Encourage the State to implement more programs  
13 to address the wide range of issues faced by Persian Gulf  
14 War Veterans, especially those who took part in combat, by  
15 creating an official commission to further study Persian  
16 Gulf War Diseases. The commission shall consist of 9  
17 members appointed as follows: the Speaker and Minority  
18 Leader of the House of Representatives and the President  
19 and Minority Leader of the Senate shall each appoint one  
20 member from the General Assembly, the Governor shall  
21 appoint 4 members to represent veterans' organizations,  
22 and the Department shall appoint one member. The commission  
23 members shall serve without compensation; and ~~and~~

24 (12) Conduct an annual review of the benefits received  
25 by Illinois veterans that compares benefits received by  
26 Illinois veterans with the benefits received by veterans in  
27 all other states and U.S. territories. The required annual  
28 review shall include, but not be limited to, (1) the  
29 average benefit paid to individual veterans from Illinois,  
30 in direct comparison to the average benefit paid to  
31 individual veterans of each of the other states and U.S.  
32 territories; (2) the number of veterans receiving benefits  
33 in Illinois for the first time during the year compared to  
34 the number of claims filed by Illinois veterans during the  
35 year; (3) the aggregate number of Illinois veterans  
36 receiving benefits compared to the number of veterans from

1 each of the other states and U.S. territories receiving  
2 benefits; and (4) a categorical analysis of the types of  
3 injuries and disabilities for which benefits are being paid  
4 in Illinois and each of the other states and U.S.  
5 territories. The benefits review shall be reported to the  
6 Governor, the General Assembly, and the Illinois  
7 Congressional delegation upon the completion of the report  
8 each year.

9 The Department may accept and hold on behalf of the State,  
10 if for the public interest, a grant, gift, devise or bequest of  
11 money or property to the Department made for the general  
12 benefit of Illinois veterans, including the conduct of  
13 informational and training services by the Department and other  
14 authorized purposes of the Department. The Department shall  
15 cause each grant, gift, devise or bequest to be kept as a  
16 distinct fund and shall invest such funds in the manner  
17 provided by the Public Funds Investment Act, as now or  
18 hereafter amended, and shall make such reports as may be  
19 required by the Comptroller concerning what funds are so held  
20 and the manner in which such funds are invested. The Department  
21 may make grants from these funds for the general benefit of  
22 Illinois veterans. Grants from these funds, except for the  
23 funds established under Sections 2.01a and 2.03, shall be  
24 subject to appropriation.

25 The Department has the power to make grants, from funds  
26 appropriated from the Korean War Veterans National Museum and  
27 Library Fund, to private organizations for the benefit of the  
28 Korean War Veterans National Museum and Library.

29 The Department has the power to make grants, from funds  
30 appropriated from the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, for  
31 benefits authorized under the Survivors Compensation Act.

32 (Source: P.A. 92-198, eff. 8-1-01; 92-651, eff. 7-11-02;  
33 93-839, eff. 7-30-04.)

34 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January  
35 1, 2006.