



Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia

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09500HB2179ham001

LRB095 01121 DRJ 35357 a

1 AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 2179

2 AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_. Amend House Bill 2179 by replacing  
3 everything after the enacting clause with the following:

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.

8 (a) The Department shall have the following powers and  
9 duties:

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

1 and in pursuance thereof shall:

2 (1) Contact veterans, their survivors and dependents  
3 and advise them of the benefits of state and federal laws  
4 and assist them in obtaining such benefits;

5 (2) Establish field offices and direct the activities  
6 of the personnel assigned to such offices;

7 (3) Create a volunteer field force of accredited  
8 representatives, representing educational institutions,  
9 labor organizations, veterans organizations, employers,  
10 churches, and farm organizations;

11 (4) Conduct informational and training services;

12 (5) Conduct educational programs through newspapers,  
13 periodicals and radio for the specific purpose of  
14 disseminating information affecting veterans and their  
15 dependents;

16 (6) Coordinate the services and activities of all state  
17 departments having services and resources affecting  
18 veterans and their dependents;

19 (7) Encourage and assist in the coordination of  
20 agencies within counties giving service to veterans and  
21 their dependents;

22 (8) Cooperate with veterans organizations and other  
23 governmental agencies;

24 (9) Make, alter, amend and promulgate reasonable rules  
25 and procedures for the administration of this Act;

26 (10) Make and publish annual reports to the Governor

1        regarding the administration and general operation of the  
2        Department;

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

15           (12) Conduct an annual review of the benefits received  
16        by Illinois veterans that compares benefits received by  
17        Illinois veterans with the benefits received by veterans in  
18        all other states and U.S. territories. The required annual  
19        review shall include, but not be limited to, (1) the  
20        average benefit paid to individual veterans from Illinois,  
21        in direct comparison to the average benefit paid to  
22        individual veterans of each of the other states and U.S.  
23        territories; (2) the number of veterans receiving benefits  
24        in Illinois for the first time during the year compared to  
25        the number of claims filed by Illinois veterans during the  
26        year; (3) the aggregate number of Illinois veterans

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

10 (b) The Department shall create and administer a suicide  
11 prevention program for veterans of the armed forces, including  
12 redeployed veterans of the Illinois National Guard. The program  
13 shall become operational within 100 days after the effective  
14 date of this amendatory Act of the 95th General Assembly. The  
15 program's primary goal shall be to address and reduce the  
16 incidence of suicide and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
17 among veterans of the military and the National Guard  
18 (hereinafter, "veterans").

19 The program shall provide the following:

20 (1) Public education and awareness programs directed  
21 at veterans, the families of veterans, health care  
22 professionals, mental health professionals, and the  
23 public, focusing on recognizing the signs, symptoms, and  
24 behavioral patterns of those at risk of committing suicide  
25 and those suffering from PTSD.

26 (2) Psychiatric, psychological, or other appropriate

1       mental health care services to veterans at risk of suicide.

2       (3) Referral services to appropriate mental health  
3       care services for veterans afflicted by PTSD.

4       (4) Any other services the Director of the Department  
5       deems appropriate for addressing and reducing the  
6       incidence of suicide and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder  
7       among veterans.

8       The Director of the Department shall submit an annual  
9       report to the members of the General Assembly no later than  
10       June 15 of each year, outlining the program's activities from  
11       the preceding year.

12       The Department of Military Affairs shall disseminate  
13       information regarding the suicide prevention program  
14       established pursuant to this subsection to all redeployed  
15       members of the Illinois National Guard within 72 hours after  
16       their redeployment.

17       (c) The Department may accept and hold on behalf of the  
18       State, if for the public interest, a grant, gift, devise or  
19       bequest of money or property to the Department made for the  
20       general benefit of Illinois veterans, including the conduct of  
21       informational and training services by the Department and other  
22       authorized purposes of the Department. The Department shall  
23       cause each grant, gift, devise or bequest to be kept as a  
24       distinct fund and shall invest such funds in the manner  
25       provided by the Public Funds Investment Act, as now or  
26       hereafter amended, and shall make such reports as may be

1 required by the Comptroller concerning what funds are so held  
2 and the manner in which such funds are invested. The Department  
3 may make grants from these funds for the general benefit of  
4 Illinois veterans. Grants from these funds, except for the  
5 funds established under Sections 2.01a and 2.03, shall be  
6 subject to appropriation.

7 (d) The Department has the power to make grants, from funds  
8 appropriated from the Korean War Veterans National Museum and  
9 Library Fund, to private organizations for the benefit of the  
10 Korean War Veterans National Museum and Library.

11 (e) The Department has the power to make grants, from funds  
12 appropriated from the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, for  
13 benefits authorized under the Survivors Compensation Act.

14 (Source: P.A. 93-839, eff. 7-30-04; 94-167, eff. 1-1-06.)".