



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5799

January Session, 2007

* _____ HB05799APP __ 041907 _____ *

AN ACT REQUIRING A SERVICE OFFICER WITH PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 27-102l of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2007*):

3 (a) There shall be a Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Veterans'
4 Home shall be within the department and shall be located in Rocky
5 Hill. The department head shall be the Commissioner of Veterans'
6 Affairs, who shall be appointed by the Governor in accordance with
7 the provisions of sections 4-5 to 4-8, inclusive, with the powers and
8 duties prescribed therein.

9 (b) The commissioner may appoint a unit head to administer a
10 veterans' advocacy and assistance unit for the aid and benefit of
11 veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents and family members.
12 The unit shall have a staff of not less than eight men and women,
13 including six service officers, and clerical personnel. The unit head and
14 the service officers shall be veterans, as defined in section 27-103, or
15 veterans who were awarded the armed forces expeditionary medal for
16 service by the armed forces. At least one of the service officers shall be
17 a woman having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women
18 veterans, who shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and,

19 effective upon the next opening of a service officer position occurring
20 on or after July 1, 2007, at least one of the service officers shall be an
21 individual having bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish, within
22 existing authorized positions. Each service officer shall successfully
23 complete a course in veterans' benefits within one year of
24 commencement of employment and shall be assigned to one of the five
25 congressional districts of the state.

26 (c) In addition to the powers and duties prescribed under section 4-
27 8, the commissioner shall have the following powers and duties:

28 (1) To prepare studies and collect information concerning facilities
29 and services available to members of the armed forces, veterans, their
30 spouses or eligible dependents, including facilities and services for
31 veterans who may have been exposed to a Vietnam herbicide during
32 their periods of military service;

33 (2) To conduct interviews in the nursing homes or hospitals
34 throughout the state to determine the number of veterans admitted
35 and ascertaining which benefits such veterans are currently receiving
36 and are entitled to receive;

37 (3) To cooperate with service agencies and organizations
38 throughout the state in disseminating and furnishing counsel and
39 assistance of benefit to residents of this state who are or have been
40 members of the armed forces, their spouses or eligible dependents,
41 which will indicate the availability of: (A) Educational training and
42 retraining facilities; (B) health, medical, rehabilitation and housing
43 services and facilities; (C) employment and reemployment services; (D)
44 provisions of federal, state and local laws affording financial rights,
45 privileges and benefits; and (E) other matters of similar nature;

46 (4) To assist veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents and
47 family members in the preparation, presentation, proof and
48 establishment of such claims, privileges, rights and other benefits
49 accruing to them under federal, state and local laws;

50 (5) To cooperate with all national, state and local governmental and
51 private agencies securing or offering services or any benefits to
52 veterans, their spouses or dependents;

53 (6) To develop and prepare a long-range plan and mission statement
54 for the Veterans' Home and the veterans' advocacy and assistance unit;
55 and

56 (7) To review all appeals made by veterans, their spouses or eligible
57 dependents or family members and render the final decision thereon
58 regarding the denial of admission to any program or the refusal to
59 render any service or benefit which is administered by the Department
60 of Veterans' Affairs, the discharge or transfer from any such program
61 or any disciplinary action taken while participating in any such
62 program.

63 (d) The commissioner shall adopt, in accordance with the provisions
64 of chapter 54, and enforce, such regulations and procedures for the
65 operation, administration and management of the department and all
66 programs and services under the jurisdiction of the department,
67 including, but not limited to, procedures relating to admission and
68 discharge or transfer of veterans in the Veterans' Home, a per diem fee
69 schedule for programs, services and benefits provided by the Veterans'
70 Home, and the participation of eligible family members in programs or
71 services provided by the home.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	<i>27-102l</i>

APP *Joint Favorable Subst.*