

# SENATE BILL 52

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(PRE-FILED)

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By: **Senator Benson**

Requested: November 4, 2013

Introduced and read first time: January 8, 2014

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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## A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

### **Task Force to Study Services and Resources Provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs**

FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Study Services and Resources Provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs; providing for the composition, chair, and staffing of the Task Force; prohibiting a member of the Task Force from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Task Force to study and make recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Task Force to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Task Force to Study Services and Resources Provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:

(a) There is a Task Force to Study Services and Resources Provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

(1) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate;

(2) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(3) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or the Secretary's designee; and

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(4) four representatives from veteran organizations located in the State, appointed by the Governor.

(c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Task Force.

(d) The Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide staff for the Task Force.

(e) A member of the Task Force:

(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(f) The Task Force shall:

(1) study the services and resources provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and issues that affect the ability of veterans residing in the State to access the services and resources; and

(2) make recommendations regarding how to improve the services and resources provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans residing in the State, including:

(i) lowering the case loads of employees who work with veterans to address their needs;

(ii) offering more privacy to veterans who are discussing personal needs and issues with employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(iii) decreasing the amount of time veterans wait for services from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(g) On or before December 31, 2014, the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2014. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2015, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.