

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 52

(Senator Benson)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

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

This bill creates the Task Force to Study Services and Resources Provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). The task force must (1) study the services, including access to a kinesiotherapist, and resources provided by DVA and issues that affect the ability of veterans living in Maryland to access those services and resources and (2) make recommendations as to how to improve those services and resources. DVA must provide staff for the task force. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2014.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2014, and terminates June 30, 2015.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for DVA are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: DVA was created by Chapters 124 and 125 of 1999 as an executive agency with the mission of assisting veterans, active duty service members, and their families and dependents in securing benefits earned through military service. Chapters 124 and 125 specified that the Maryland Veterans Commission, the Maryland

Veterans' Home Commission; and the War Memorial Commission be organized under the newly created department.

DVA administers four major programs: the Veterans Cemetery and Memorial Program; the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home; the Veterans Service and Benefits Program; and the Outreach and Advocacy Program. According to the DVA website, the department's service mission is to:

- provide representation to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs;
- provide referrals to other federal, State, and local government agencies for benefits which may be available to eligible individuals;
- manage and operate authorized Maryland State Veteran Cemeteries and a Civil War Cemetery;
- maintain and care for memorials for the Maryland World War II, Vietnam, and Korean War Veterans;
- manage the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home Program; and
- provide staff support and assistance to State veteran commissions.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 10, 2014
mc/lgc Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 18, 2014

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