

HOUSE BILL 1275

P1

7lr3150
CF SB 857

By: Delegates Vogt, Brooks, Folden, C. Wilson, ~~and P. Young~~ P. Young, Pendergrass, Bromwell, Angel, Cullison, Hayes, Hill, Kelly, Kipke, Krebs, McDonough, Metzgar, Miele, Morales, Morgan, Pena-Melnyk, Platt, Rosenberg, Saab, Sample-Hughes, Szeliga, West, and K. Young

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2017

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 15, 2017

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Government – Department of Veterans Affairs – Veterans’ Services**
3 **Specialists**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring units of State government to designate an employee of the
5 unit as a veterans’ services specialist to coordinate services with the director of the
6 veterans Outreach and Advocacy Program in the Department of Veterans Affairs
7 and attend certain training, to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with
8 certain information, and to post certain information on the unit’s Web site; requiring
9 certain governmental units to direct veterans to contact the Department and provide
10 the veterans with certain contact information; requiring the Department to
11 coordinate certain meetings and submit a certain report; and generally relating to
12 veterans’ services specialists at units of State government.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
14 Article – State Government
15 Section 9–943
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

18 BY adding to
19 Article – State Government
20 Section 9–944

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 Annotated Code of Maryland
2 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

3 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
4 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

5 **Article – State Government**

6 9–943.

7 (a) (1) For the purposes of reaching any veteran, veteran’s dependent, or
8 veteran’s survivor in need of assistance in obtaining services or benefits granted by the law,
9 the director shall develop and implement an outreach plan.

10 (2) In order to carry out the director’s responsibilities under paragraph (1)
11 of this subsection, the director may:

12 (i) enter into contracts; and

13 (ii) work with governmental units and community–based
14 organizations, including the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department
15 of Aging, faith–based groups, veterans groups, senior centers, adult day care centers,
16 institutions of higher education, and other entities the director considers appropriate.

17 (b) (1) The director shall develop mechanisms for outreach to be disseminated
18 by direct mail and through community–based veterans organizations, the Department of
19 Veterans Affairs, the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Health and
20 Mental Hygiene, and any other State agency or unit the director considers appropriate.

21 (2) The mechanisms for outreach shall include:

22 (i) the development of a pamphlet describing the services provided
23 by the Outreach and Advocacy Program;

24 (ii) a regular newsletter;

25 (iii) brochures describing various benefits or any other issue or
26 benefit of interest to veterans or their dependents; and

27 (iv) other measures the director considers appropriate.

28 (c) The Department shall develop and maintain a database of veterans in the
29 State.

30 (d) The Department, in conjunction with the types of community–based
31 organizations listed in subsection (a)(2) of this section, shall develop a survey to assist in
32 identifying veterans and dependents who may be eligible for pension programs.

1 (e) The Program shall:

2 (1) in conjunction with other governmental units and community-based
3 groups, seek out veterans and their dependents who may be eligible for pension program
4 benefits; and

5 (2) provide wounded or disabled veterans with information on available
6 services and benefits and support in obtaining these services and benefits.

7 **9-944.**

8 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "SPECIALIST" MEANS AN EMPLOYEE DESIGNATED BY
9 A GOVERNMENTAL UNIT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESPONDING TO AND ASSISTING
10 VETERANS WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE UNIT OR WHO CONTACT THE UNIT FOR
11 ASSISTANCE.

12 (B) EACH GOVERNMENTAL UNIT SHALL:

13 (1) DESIGNATE AN EMPLOYEE OF THE UNIT, WHO TO THE EXTENT
14 PRACTICABLE IS A VETERAN, AS A VETERANS' SERVICES SPECIALIST FOR THE UNIT
15 AND WHOSE DUTIES INCLUDE THE COORDINATION OF VETERANS' SERVICES WITH
16 THE DEPARTMENT;

17 (2) PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT WITH ANY NONPROTECTED OR
18 NONPRIVATE INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES THE UNIT PROVIDES TO VETERANS;
19 AND

20 (3) POST ON THE UNIT'S WEB SITE:

21 (I) ALL SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS FROM THE UNIT;

22 (II) THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE UNIT'S VETERANS'
23 SERVICES SPECIALIST; AND

24 (III) A LINK TO THE DEPARTMENT WITH THE CONTACT
25 INFORMATION FOR THE DIRECTOR OF THE OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM
26 IN THE DEPARTMENT.

27 (C) THE VETERANS' SERVICES SPECIALIST SHALL:

28 (1) COORDINATE THE PROVISION OF VETERANS' SERVICES
29 AVAILABLE THROUGH THE UNIT WITH THE DEPARTMENT; AND

1 **(2) ATTEND ANNUAL TRAINING THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES**
2 **CONCERNING THE COORDINATION OF VETERANS’ SERVICES.**

3 **(D) ON REQUEST FOR SERVICES BY A VETERAN, A GOVERNMENTAL UNIT**
4 **THAT DOES NOT PROVIDE SERVICES TO VETERANS SHALL DIRECT THE VETERAN TO**
5 **CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT AND PROVIDE THE VETERAN WITH THE DEPARTMENT**
6 **CONTACT INFORMATION.**

7 **(E) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:**

8 **(1) COORDINATE A MEETING EACH QUARTER, OR AS OTHERWISE**
9 **NECESSARY, WITH GOVERNMENTAL UNITS TO DISCUSS AND RECEIVE INFORMATION**
10 **CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION;**
11 **AND**

12 **(2) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 15 EACH YEAR, REPORT ON THE**
13 **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION TO THE GOVERNOR**
14 **AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.**

15 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
16 October 1, 2017.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.