

SENATE BILL 857

P1

(7lr3324)

ENROLLED BILL

— *Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs/Health and Government Operations* —

Introduced by **Senators Smith and Waugh**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

Proofreader.

Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this

_____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, _____ M.

President.

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

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

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

14 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

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.

Italics indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.



1 Article – State Government
2 Section 9–943
3 Annotated Code of Maryland
4 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

5 BY adding to
6 Article – State Government
7 Section 9–944
8 Annotated Code of Maryland
9 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

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

12 **Article – State Government**

13 9–943.

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

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

19 (i) enter into contracts; and

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

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

28 (2) The mechanisms for outreach shall include:

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

31 (ii) a regular newsletter;

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

1 (iv) other measures the director considers appropriate.

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

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

7 (e) The Program shall:

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

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

13 **9-944.**

14 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "SPECIALIST" MEANS ~~A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF AN~~
15 EMPLOYEE DESIGNATED BY A GOVERNMENTAL UNIT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR
16 RESPONDING TO AND ASSISTING VETERANS WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE UNIT OR
17 WHO CONTACT THE UNIT FOR ASSISTANCE.

18 ~~(B) THIS SECTION APPLIES TO:~~

19 ~~(1) THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES;~~

20 ~~(2) THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL~~
21 ~~SERVICES;~~

22 ~~(3) THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD;~~

23 ~~(4) THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE; AND~~

24 ~~(5) PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE.~~

25 ~~(C) (B) EACH GOVERNMENTAL UNIT SUBJECT TO THIS SECTION SHALL:~~

26 (1) ~~ASSIGN A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE~~ DESIGNATE AN EMPLOYEE OF
27 THE UNIT, WHO TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE IS A VETERAN, AS A VETERANS'
28 SERVICES SPECIALIST FOR THE UNIT AND WHOSE DUTIES INCLUDE THE
29 COORDINATION OF VETERANS' SERVICES WITH THE DEPARTMENT;

1 **(2) PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT WITH ANY NONPROTECTED OR**
2 **NONPRIVATE INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES THE UNIT PROVIDES TO VETERANS;**
3 **AND**

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

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

6 **(II) THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE UNIT'S VETERANS'**
7 **SERVICES SPECIALIST; AND**

8 **(III) A LINK TO THE DEPARTMENT WITH THE CONTACT**
9 **INFORMATION FOR THE DIRECTOR OF THE OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM**
10 **IN THE DEPARTMENT.**

11 ~~**(D)**~~ **(C) THE VETERANS' SERVICES SPECIALIST SHALL:**

12 **(1) COORDINATE THE PROVISION OF VETERANS' SERVICES**
13 **AVAILABLE THROUGH THE UNIT WITH THE DEPARTMENT; AND**

14 **(2) ATTEND ANNUAL TRAINING THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES**
15 **CONCERNING THE COORDINATION OF VETERANS' SERVICES.**

16 ~~**(E)**~~ **(D) ON REQUEST FOR SERVICES BY A VETERAN, A GOVERNMENTAL**
17 **UNIT THAT DOES NOT PROVIDE SERVICES TO VETERANS SHALL DIRECT THE**
18 **VETERAN TO CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT AND PROVIDE THE VETERAN WITH THE**
19 **DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION.**

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

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

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

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