Illinois Veterans Advisory Council – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 10, 2021– 10:00am

Illinois Department of Affairs

Video Teleconference & Phone Conference Line

Attendance:

NAME	APPOINTED BY	PRESENT
Stanley Olenjack	Marine Corps League	X
Anthony Ortiz	IDVA Director	X
Al Reynolds	Disabled American Veterans	X
	President of Senate	
Senator Sue Rezin	Minority Leader of Senate	X
Rep. Lance Yednock	Speaker of the House	X
Rep. Dan Swanson	Minority Leader of the House	X
Bill Wolff	IDVA Director	X
	IDVA Director	
Megan Everett	IDVA Director	X
Quinn Triplett	IDVA Director	X
Command Sgt. Maj. Dena Ballowe	National Guard	
Tom Banning	Attorney General	X
Greg Curran	IL Secretary of State	
Jorge Bermudez/Rich Wuthrich	IL Department of Securities	X
Myron Kirby	The American Legion	X
Keith Wetherell	AMVETS	X
Peggy Arick	Blue Star Mothers of America	
Pat Noel	Catholic War Veterans	X
Dr. Jerry Field	Jewish War Veterans	X
Joe Schaler	Military Order of the Purple Heart	X
Michael Peck	Military Order of the World Wars	X
Lou Myers	Reserve Officers' Association	X
John Murray	IACVAC	X
Vince Long	Veterans of Foreign Wars	X
Roy Dolgos	Vietnam Veterans of America	
	IDVA Director	
Bob Tyler	MOAA	X
Bill Browne	Cook County VAC	
Senator Craig Wilcox	DSTF Position	X

New Members:

Guests: Julie Friebele

Call to Order 10:00am

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence

Introductions:

IDVA Staff:

Peter Nazamis, Acting Director
Tony Kolbeck, Chief of Staff
Anthony Vaughn, Acting Assistant Director
Crystal Womack, Programs Manager
Gwen Diehl, Homes/Projects Manager
Amy Brennan, Legislative Liaison
Jenny Franklin – Director's Assistant
Mark Patterson – Field Supervisor
Dan Wellman – SAA
Connie Watson – Grants
Feisul Khan - Legal

Approval of December 9th, 2020 minutes
Motion to approve the Minutes by Bill Wolff
Vince Long seconded motion

Chairman Mike Peck:
As we begin our first meeting, I would like to remind everyone of the purpose of IVAC. The purpose is to advise the Department of Veterans' Affairs with respect to the fulfillment of its statutory duties. To review and study the issues and concerns that are the most significant to Illinois veterans, and advise the department on those issues and concerns. Addressing problems in the veteran community and seek resolutions for those problems. That is our purpose for being here.

My first action as chairman is to appoint a secretary. I would like to appoint Crystal Womack. Is there a motion to accept my appointment?

Motion made by Bill Wolff and 2nd by Vince Long
All in favor

We would like to provide Julie Friebele (Village of Elwood) a few moments to discuss a problem at Abraham Lincoln Cemetery.

Julie Friebele:

Thank you for having me. I would like to speak to the IVAC members regarding the proposed bridge. This structure will inhibit phase 3 of the Abraham Lincoln Cemetery in Elwood, IL. There would be approximately 5,000 cars a day crossing that bridge along with trucks as well. A big concern is the bridge is a closed loop directly for the development of Northway. This would be a new exit and entrance that would directly affect the cemetery. Another concern is while heading down Route 53 trucks will get lost not knowing how to get onto that bridge and they will use Abraham Lincoln Cemetery as their pass through.

With so many additional vehicles driving through this is considered disrespectful to our veterans.

Tony Kolbeck (Chief of Staff):
I defer to the director; however, the Governor has issued a statement concerning that project in particular and I will defer to Interim Director Nezamis to respond.

Interim Director Nezamis:
The Governor is concerned, and I know that there are discussions taking place regarding this. I am confident that he is going to bring parties to the table in terms of county and city to discuss and make sure that any plans for development in that area will not disgrace the cemetery or the veterans that are buried there. I believe the concern is loud and clear and I am certain the Governor will gather the right team to make the right choices.

Chairman Mike Peck:
Julie, please stay in touch with us regarding updates. I know that several veteran organizations are following as well.

Bill Wolff:
I would like to propose a motion to accept the December 9th minutes as printed.

Vince Long:
2nd motion. All in favor, minutes approved as printed.

Chairman Mike Peck:
Before I introduce the Director, I would like to make a couple of comments.

IDVA Advisory Council Chairman's Report

Michael Peck

I have served on this council now for over 10 years. I was first appointed by Director Dan Grant. I have looked at the web sites for other state councils and I understand the good that we can do by working together. In legislation, we need a combine effort to ensure that our veterans and their families receive the best care possible by urging the General Assembly to provide for our heroes and their families. It is our sacred duty to put a light on issues that need to be addressed. I again, ask you to support a recommended legislative agenda, bring these bills to your membership and urge them to call their legislators. When a bill comes up for a hearing, please as an organization provide a witness slip as a proponent, this lets the committee know that the bill has your support and that we deem it necessary.

I have asked each presenter to prepare a written report for the secretary, so that they can be attached to the minutes. This will make it easier for the secretary and easier for us to review and approve.

I have added items to the agenda that I have deemed necessary for your review. In addition to the homes, we will have reports on the lottery, and field services. On legislation, this needs to be looked at from two viewpoints, we as a council can recommend legislation to the general assembly, the director can ask us to recommend his legislation that affects IDVA.

I want to thank everyone for volunteering your time to serve the veterans of Illinois.

Interim Director Nezamis:
Chairman Peck, thank you for having me here today. As most of you know the Governor asked me to step into this position a couple of months ago. I have been doing this role now for almost 2 months. I have had the opportunity with COS Kolbeck to visit our homes and meet our staff and our veterans. The dedication of my staff and staff at the homes has been overwhelming in terms of their care to do the right thing for our veterans. I have started to meet with our VSO teams that are placed throughout the state.

I would like to start with good news, as I have read the minutes from the previous meeting and I am seeing a stark contrast from the previous months. The last report out was a dark hour at IDVA. I can tell you from what I am seeing up to today, we are making steps forward. We have started a slow process of admissions. We have a process where they will be in quarantine upon arrival for 2 weeks then introduce them to the population. This will continue to Manteno and LaSalle very soon and we will be holding off on Anna as we have some capital improvements taking place that were delayed due to covid. I was also able to tour our Chicago home and we are looking at

the furniture arrival by the end of April. Interviews for staffing are taking place to fill the roles at the Chicago home. We do hope to accept residents starting this summer. As well, 2 weeks ago we had a preconstruction meeting in Quincy to begin construction on several new facilities on the campus along with demolition of other facilities. We have also started visitation in the homes. We are proceeding with the old adage of crawl, walk, run.

The residents of our homes are currently at 95% vaccinated. We are currently at 56% for staff. We are above the national range for both categories. Testing continues to be sure that we are not bringing Covid into our homes. I would like to thank you all for how you support us and what you do. We do have our mission statement on our website that states who we are and what we do. I will pause now to take any questions.

Chairman Mike Peck:
Thank you, sir. Your staff has been very cooperative with me, especially Chief Kolbeck, Amy and Crystal. We thank you for your assistance.

Stanley Olenjack:
Question for the Director. What role does the IDVA play in vaccinating the veterans in the state of Illinois? Are we getting the word out to them? Or is the Federal VA running things?

Interim Director Nezamis:
In terms of the IDVA, we have engaged with the veteran's and families in our homes and on our waiting lists to encourage them to be vaccinated. Veterans outside of our homes are being informed by the VSO's.

Chairman Mike Peck:
Thank you, Director and Tony.

Amy Brennan, legislative report:

Amy Brennan:
Good morning members. I started my position about a year ago with IDVA. We just started the legislative session and I will give a quick update on a few of our initiatives. We have 3 initiatives, 2 legislative bills and 1 resolution. Once I finish, I would like to turn it over to our legislators to add information as well.

We just began our 102nd legislative session a couple of weeks ago. There are thousands of bills that we are sifting through at this time. IDVA as you know in the past does not always take an active position. We will step in if there is something that directly impacts the agency and the operations of the agency. If there are things we can do on other pieces of legislation, we take them one at a time.

We do have a draft on the Medal of Honor resolution. We talked it through with the Department of Transportation regarding any concerns they might have due to cost and also due to US Highway 20 has already been named in a couple of areas. We were able to work through the concerns with that as well. We will be able to move forward, however it has not been introduced as of yet. We hope to do so in the next month. I have reached out to the legislators in the Elgin area to sponsor.

I would like to share the floor with Senator Wilcox for any input.

Senator Wilcox:
I am the new Minority Spokesperson to the Veterans Affairs Committee in the senate. I am a retired Air Force Colonel after 24 years on active duty.

We often get asked if witness slips make a difference. As a legislator for 2 years, I was always looking at the witness slips. It is the one way that individuals can have their voices heard. I have seen bills either pulled out of the record or significantly changed because of the significant witness slip submissions. On the negative, I have also seen bills trapped in their original form and added as a shell bill to negate the witness slips. Staying active is absolutely critical.

There are four other bills that I would like the council to take a look at. First being SB59. Senator Cullerton and I have signed on as a chief co. This would reduce IDFPR fees for active duty and their spouses when trying to get licensed through the state. SB611 is my bill to assist in getting veterans more permanently engaged in the Business Enterprise system. SB1806 is one of my bills to address registration fees through motor vehicle admissions for disabled veterans. SB2149 is one of my bills. It affects a small portion of those in service who are also teachers. There is a 5-year limit on active duty time that affects their pension and we are looking to get that extended.

If the council would take a look at those additional bills to be sure there are no concerns with the language or whether you support or have recommended changes.

Thank you for your time.

Chairman Mike Peck:
Thank you, sir. Representative Swanson, the floor is yours.

Representative Swanson:
There are couple of bills that I would like to talk about as well. Once again, this year we are trying to get the veteran spouse bill through. Where the benefits of the veteran would move over to the spouse. There are different property taxes where if you pay based on compensatory determination. We have tried to get this legislation through for several years and we are hoping to move that through. We are looking for support, if you could please call your representatives and senators and show your support. (HB2378).

Our committee hearings for the veterans committee are held on Tuesday's at 9:00am via zoom if you would like to participate or watch. Next week we have a veterans committee hearing which IDVA will be participating in.

My legislation this year is somewhat focused on active duty members. One piece is regarding when you have to move your family between the months of May and September. Which in return makes it difficult to enroll your children in particular classes. My legislation will allow once the orders are received for a certain duty station, they could then begin the process to enroll their children. (HB2862)

(HB2858) This bill lowers the age for which a person may apply for a FOID card from 21 to 18. If a service member comes home on leave at 18 or 19 and they are not permitted to go to a rifle range or have a FOID card to go hunting when they come home.

Representative Yednock:
I have 5 different bills listed that you can see on my page at ILGA. I would love to have your feedback on them. I take a lot of direction from my colleagues.

Amy Brennan:
Mr. Chairman, I intentionally just talked about the initiatives that we are currently working on. I did see the list that you put together and I will defer to you for information regarding that list.

Chairman Mike Peck:
We will put that under new business as most of the bills were carried over from last year.

Let's move to the Veteran's Home. Gwen….

Veterans' Homes Coordinator Gwen Diehl:

Veterans Advisory Committee
Veterans' Homes Coordinator's Report
March 10, 2021

In response to COVID-19, visits to nursing homes and the State Veterans' Homes were shut down and admissions halted on the advice of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) on March 16, 2020. The Illinois Capital Development Board completed projects to create Airborne Isolation Rooms at Anna, LaSalle, Manteno, and Quincy. Unfortunately, despite these efforts there was an outbreak at the LaSalle Home in November 2020 which resulted in a number of residents and staff testing positive and succumbing to the virus.

The General Assembly held hearings into the handling of the outbreak. The outcome has been the appointments of an Acting Administrator at IVH-L and an Interim Director for IDVA. The Homes continue to enforce policies and procedures to ensure the safety of the residents and staff. If medical care requirements for any resident exceed the capability of the Home, residents are transported to the local hospital.

- | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | -

Many of the Department's capital projects were temporarily halted due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. A limited number of projects that require only outside access have been allowed to continue.

Ongoing Capital Projects

(Estimated costs)

- **Illinois Veterans' Home at Anna**
  - Replace Nurse Call System
    (The Architect and Contractor have agreed to enhanced Personal Protection Equipment and will be allowed into the Home to complete this project. The Home has had an unreliable Nurse Call System for quite some time.) $193,700
  - General Building Repairs and Improvements
    (The Architect has not been allowed into the facility to observe existing conditions and begin design work.) 2,166,700

    $ 2,360,400

- **Illinois Veterans' Home at Chicago**
  - 200 Bed NHC Building
    (Substantial Completion was April 24, 2020 and the contractors continue to work as needed completing completed most of the punch list items.) **$ 175,150,000**
  - We requested participation in the USDVA State Home Construction Grant Program. Due to some restrictions, we were only able to recoup a portion of the cost increases, but Connie has closed out the grant and we received $42,575,000.
  - We still need:

Gwen M. Diehl, Veterans' Homes Coordinator
217-785-4575 (gwen.diehl@illinois.gov)

March 3, 2021

Veterans Advisory Committee
Veterans' Homes Coordinator's Report
March 10, 2021

- Licensure by IDPH
- Inspection by USDVA
- Continued recruitment and hiring of staff; provide staff orientation
- Accepting waiting list applications. Will have to undergo review and approval to ensure we can meet the needs of the applicants.
- Will begin admitting veterans after licensure by IDPH and certification by USDVA and sufficient staffing.

- **Illinois Veterans' Home at LaSalle**
  - Replace Wander Guard and Nurse Call System (Original Building)
    (Project out for Re-Bid) $ 583,100
  - Replace Original Generator, Chiller and Mechanical Systems
    (A/E not able to get into Home to complete the design and cost estimating to determine adequacy of funding). 2,203,600

    $ 2,786,700

- **Illinois Veterans' Home at Manteno**
  - EMERGENCY Automatic Flush Valves, Mixing Valves & Water Filtration
    (The Emergency Automatic Flush Valves and Mixing Valves is still evolving, but CDB needs to cut us off, so we will likely have to request some additional work in a future capital project request.) $ 9,934,118
  - Replace Air Handling Units in residential buildings
    (two separate projects: one for R1 & R2 and one for R3, R4, S1 & S2) 6,369,100
  - Replace Various Roofing Systems
    (Flat Roofing System and Structural Repairs underway. Shingle Roofing Replacement going out for bid) 5,683,200
  - Replace Water Mains on campus
    (Still in Design and cost estimating. Separating Domestic and Fire Mains) 2,038,000
  - Central Kitchen Renovation
    (Still in design and cost estimating. Project will renovate Dish Machine Room) 750,700
  - Renovate Restrooms
    (Still undergoing Code Analysis and design development.) 3,187,300

    $27,962,418

- **Illinois Veterans' Home at Quincy –**
  - Construct Domestic Water Loop
    Moving forward, the design will facilitate the footprint of the new buildings (Exact construction estimate not available at this time) $ 3,000,000
  - Construct New Nursing Home and Domiciliary (less Asbestos Remediation)

Gwen M. Diehl, Veterans' Homes Coordinator
217-785-4575 (gwen.diehl@illinois.gov)

March 3, 2021

Veterans Advisory Committee
Veterans' Homes Coordinator's Report
March 10, 2021

- Bridging Documents were completed October 2019.
- Veterans United Constructors were selected & approved by CDB
- Notice of award and contract completed by CDB.
- Kick-off meeting was held 2/24/2021.
- Design development will begin
- Project submitted to USDVA and approved for reimbursement of approximately $197,047,500
- Forty-two month construction projection (after Authorization to Proceed) 240,564,444

- Abated asbestos in seven buildings
  (Completed in preparation for demolition to make way for the footprint of the new buildings) 724,000
- Projects to Expand and Restore Sunset Cemetery ICJ/w NCA
  (Ready to go to bid) 1,050,000
- Roof Replacement at Ehle Laundry and Tradesmen Buildings
  (Project in design) 406,700

$ 244,695,144

Construction Project Cost Recap:

Illinois Veterans' Home at Anna	**2,360,400**
Illinois Veterans' Home at Chicago	*** 175,150,000**
Illinois Veterans' Home at LaSalle	**2,786,700**
Illinois Veterans' Home at Manteno	**27,962,418**
Illinois Veterans' Home at Quincy	**245,745,144**
	$ 454,004,662

(Without IVH-C: $278,854,662*

Gwen M. Diehl, Veterans' Homes Coordinator
217-785-4575 (gwen.diehl@illinois.gov)

March 3, 2021

Veterans Advisory Committee
Veterans' Homes Coordinator's Report
March 10, 2021

CENSUS

Date: Feb 12- Feb 18, 2021

Home	Skilled Census	Budgeted Skilled Census	Skilled Vacancies	Admits This Week	Admits Next Week	Dom Census	Dom Vacancies
Anna	32	*49*	17	0	0	4	3
La Salle	87	*184*	97	0	0		
Manteno	146	*294*	148				
Quincy	217	382	165	0	0	42	46
Prince	9	*15*	6	0	0	0	

Home	Short Waiting List (Waiting Time in Weeks)							Long Waiting List			
	Skilled	Wait Time	SNU	Wait Time	DOM	Wait Time	PTime	Skilled	SNU	PTime	DOM
Anna	23				7	12	54	22		6	12
La Salle	37		15				47	3	0	0	
Manteno	64		11				65	9	2		
Quincy	43		3		5		11				
Prince	0							0			

NOTE: There are no admissions at this time.

Gwen M. Diehl, Veterans' Homes Coordinator
217-785-4575 (gwen.diehl@illinois.gov)

March 3, 2021

Chairman Mike Peck:
Thank you, Gwen.

As well, Steve Fixler has 200 welcome bags for the opening of the Chicago home.

Myron Kirby:
Gwen are we taking any patients at the Chicago home as of yet?

Gwen Diehl:
No, we are still pending approval from IDPH and then we have to certified by USDVA. I'm not sure where we are with that.

Amy Brennan:
Crystal sent out an email a bit back regarding scheduling tours of the home. I will be helping the administrator with those tours, so please reach out to me to schedule if you would like. In the email there is also a virtual tour that you can share with your organizations.

Mike Peck:
Now to the Veterans Cash Lottery update. Is Connie Watson available….

IVAC Report – Vets Cash Scratch-Off Lottery Ticket Program

March 10, 2021

1. **Vets Cash Committee Review**
   The FY21 Second Quarter Meeting was held on February 24, 2021, the Veterans Cash Grant Authorization Committee (GAC) reviewed 6 applications that were received from October through December 2020. The following is a summary of what the GAC decided about each grant applicant with a recommendation for 3 applicants to award and 3 applications to deny. All applicant votes described below were unanimous.

   New Applicants:

Grant #	Rubric Score	Applicant Name	Amount Requested	Denied	Awarded
1. 696	4	Prairie State College	$27,210	___X__	_____
2. 697	2	The John Marshall Law School	$60,297	_____	__X__
3. 698	1	Goodwill Industries	$52,253	_____	__X__
4. 699	3	The Chicago Lighthouse for People	$75,000	_____	__X__
5. 700	5	AllenForce	$44,678	___X__	_____
6. 701	6	Fishing for Freedom	$25,000	___X__	_____

   - Funds available: $250,000
   - New Applications: $284,438
   - TOTAL Awarded: $187,551
   - Balance Remaining: $ 62,449

2. **Vets Cash Balance**
   Vets Cash Fund Balance (236 Revenues vs. Expenditures): $2,145,568
   (as of February 16, 2021)
   Grants Currently Processing: $214,695

   Reserved to Award in FY Q3 and Q4: $500,000

   Remaining Balance: $1,430,873

3. **Next Committee Review Date:** May 19, 2021

Prepared by Connie Watson

Chairman Mike Peck:

Any questions for Connie?

That is 2.1 million that we are looking at for next year.

Representative Swanson:
Connie, it seems odd that we will not fund women veterans with mental health issues because of the guidelines that we use. Who established the guidelines and what changes can be made?

Connie Watson:
I agree and it's a good point. This funding code is our administrative code (95 section 125). There are 6 funding categories: PTSD, Homelessness, Health Insurance Cost, Disabilities, Long Term Care, Employment Training. Two of the categories we hardly ever use which are Health Insurance Cost and Long-Term Care. We have a much-needed area for Emergency Financial Assistance and Mental Health. It would be a change from our legal department to change the administrative code.

Representative Swanson:
Mr. Chairman, is this something that the council can set up a committee to look at those codes?

Chairman Mike Peck:
I think if the committee is in favor, we should make a recommendation to the Director.

Representative Swanson:
I agree, but we need to come up with the directives and priorities to give to the Director.

Chairman Mike Peck:
If you can give me a written recommendation, I will submit to the group at the next meeting.

Mark Patterson are you available….

Mark Patterson:
New VSO training for accreditation is be utilized, developed, and modified as needed. We are developing and implementing continually based on survey needs and results of claim inspections. We developed formal training by using VSO focus groups, and supervisor reviews.

We do have a new training coordinator who name is Kevin Hughes. He started with IDVA in mid-November. He is currently establishing a 12-section accreditation training for our agency.

Regarding denied appeals, if we are their power of attorney, we do a total review of their claims folder. We will then do an interview with the veteran themselves however many it takes to understand their situation. Then we will make a recommendation rather there should be a personal hearing or if it is only an administrative piece and is only necessary for us to present the issue that we think was incorrectly decided. That is the process we have in place.

Chairman Mike Peck:
My concern is that because we have IDVA as a POA, we are not recommending them to go to the private sector and letting them know that we have representation for them.

Mark Patterson:
Absolutely, that is one of the items that Amy was bringing up is that we don't want them to go to the private sector. We want them to be informed by a fee-based representative that can acknowledge that they were told that they can receive this type of services without cost to them.

Chairman Mike Peck:
Thank you, Mark. Any questions?

For Old Business is General Myers on the Veterans Memorial Project.
It appears General Myers is unable to connect.

Myron Kirby?

Myron Kirby:
I have one question that I would like to bring up under new business. Does anyone know if there will have to be graves moved at Abraham Lincoln Cemetery for this project?

Chairman Mike Peck:
We will have to check on that.

Myron Kirby:
The other item that has been brought to our attention is that the American Legion has written a letter to the Governor regarding the lowering of all flags. We believe that the respect is being diminished to our veterans. At this time, we have not received a response to the letter.

I would like to make a motion that we as a committee come out with an opposition to the Governor's staff.

Vince Long:
2nd the motion

Chairman Mike Peck:
We have a motion made and 2nd regarding an opposition to leaving the flag at half-staff for covid. We recommend a timeline for this to change.

Any questions to the motion?

All in favor say "I", any opposed? Motion carried.

I will move to the last item under New Business.

You all received the listing for priority legislation. (Listed below)

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB0020	GOLD STAR PLATES-FAMILY MEMBER	03/04/2021	Placed on Calendar 2nd Reading - Short Debate	Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Removes the requirement that an applicant for a Gold Star license plate shall be charged a registration fee. Provides that no registration fee for a Gold Star license plates shall be required from a surviving widow, widower, sibling, daughter, son, or parent of a person who served in the Armed Forces of the United States and lost his or her life while in service whether in peacetime or war.	Rep. Scherer, Sue (D)	03/24/2021 08:30 AM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL
10200HB0035	VETERANS BILL OF RIGHTS	02/23/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Creates the Veterans Bill of Rights Act. Requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs to make specified efforts to: (1) increase loans to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans or service-disabled veterans; (2) increase veterans' access to health care coverage and services; (3) take specified steps toward preventing veteran suicide; and (4) develop and implement a strategy to end veteran homelessness within 3 years. Directs the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to review all State licenses for which military service members may have relevant training or experience, produce a report recommending steps that can be taken to increase recognition of military training and experience toward licensing, and take those steps within one year of issuing the report. Contains provisions regarding veterans at public institutions of higher education receiving college credit, registering for courses, and being called to active duty. Requires the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to annually review apprentice, training, and other vocational programs focused on providing job training and placement to returning military service members and veterans. Contains other provisions.	Rep. Mason, Joyce (D)		
10200HB0163	SCH CD-MILITARY DEPNDT TUITION	02/23/2021	Assigned to Elementary & Secondary Education: School Curriculum & Policies Committee	Amends the School Code. Provides that if, at the time of enrollment, a dependent of United States military personnel is housed in temporary housing located outside of a school district, but will be living within the district within 6 months (instead of within 60 days), the dependent must be allowed to enroll and must not be charged tuition. Provides that United States military personnel shall provide proof within 6 months (instead of within 60 days) after the time of enrollment that the dependent will be living within the district. Effective immediately.	Rep. Keicher, Jeff (R)	03/24/2021 08:30 AM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB0282	STATE'S ATTORNEY-LEGAL OPINION	02/23/2021	Assigned to Counties & Townships Committee	Amends the State's Attorney Division of the Counties Code. Provides that, in a county with less than 2,000,000 inhabitants, the State's Attorney may give an opinion, without fee or reward, upon any question of law relating to a County Veterans Assistance Commission. Provides that a County Veterans Assistance Commission may make such a request of the State's Attorney, and the State's Attorney, in the State's Attorney's sole discretion, may grant or decline such a request by a County Veterans Assistance Commission. Makes all provisions of the Division gender neutral. Effective immediately.	Rep. Manley, Natalie A. (D)	03/26/2021 12:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL
10200HB0285	COMM DATE-ATOMIC VETERANS DAY	03/04/2021	Placed on Calendar 2nd Reading - Consent Calendar	Amends the State Commemorative Dates Act. Provides that the 16th day of July of each year is designated a commemorative holiday to be known as Atomic Veterans Day and to be observed throughout the State as a day in honor and remembrance of the men and women of this Nation who during their time of service experienced exposure to nuclear radiation while on active duty and served so valiantly in the cause of freedom.	Rep. Bennett, Thomas M. (R)		
10200HB0313	PROP TX-SENIORS W/DISABILITIES	03/11/2021	To Property Tax Subcommittee	Amends the Property Tax Code. With respect to the homestead exemption for persons with disabilities, provides that the property is exempt from taxation if the person with a disability is 55 years of age or older at any point during the taxable year.	Rep. Mayfield, Rita (D)	03/25/2021 02:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB0335	PHYSICIANS-DEMENTIA TRAINING	03/02/2021	Assigned to Health Care Licenses Committee	Amends the Medical Practice Act of 1987. Provides that not later than 12 months after the effective date of the amendatory Act, the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation shall adopt rules that require a person seeking licensure to practice medicine in all of its branches to have completed 3 hours of education on the diagnosis, treatment, and care of individuals with cognitive impairments, including, but not limited to, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Specifies that the education requirement shall only apply to applicants who serve or will serve adult populations and have or will have direct patient interactions in their capacity as physicians. Provides that not later than 12 months after the effective date of the amendatory Act, the Department shall adopt rules that require any continuing education for persons licensed to practice medicine under all of its branches to include an average of one hour of continuing education per license year on the diagnosis, treatment, and care of individuals with cognitive impairments, including, but not limited to, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Specifies that the continuing education requirement shall only apply to persons who serve adult populations and have direct patient interactions in their capacity as physicians. Provides that the curriculum used for the education and continuing education requirements shall cover the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, including recognizing the signs and symptoms of dementia; person-centered care; assessment and care planning; and culturally competent health care.	Rep. Willis, Kathleen (D)	03/24/2021 08:30 AM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL
10200HB0390	$VETERANS-SERVICE DOGS	03/02/2021	Assigned to Appropriations-General Services Committee	Appropriates $200,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to be used for a $100,000 grant to the Willing Partners Canine Education, Inc. and a $100,000 grant to K9s for Veterans, NFP, for costs associated with service dog training for veterans. Effective July 1, 2021.	Rep. Moylan, Martin J. (D)	03/25/2021 08:00 AM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB0583	INC TX-VETERAN CAREGIVER	03/11/2021	To Income Tax Subcommittee	Amends the Illinois Income Tax Act. Creates an income tax credit for taxpayers who are caregivers of a veteran with a disability. Provides that the credit shall be in an amount equal to 5% of the costs incurred in caring for the veteran, not to exceed $1,000 in credits in any taxable year. Effective immediately.	Rep. Stuart, Katie (D)	03/25/2021 02:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL
10200HB0618	VETERANS' LICENSURE TASK FORCE	03/02/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Creates the Veterans' Licensure and Workforce Task Force Act. Creates the Veterans' Licensure and Workforce Task Force to advise the Governor and General Assembly and work directly with State agencies and institutions of higher education to improve and expand policies, services, programs, and opportunities for service members, veterans, and their families. Provides specified subjects for the Task Force to review and make recommendations on. Requires the Task Force to prepare and submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor on or before December 1, 2022, and to other specified agencies in electronic form. Provides that the Act is repealed on December 1, 2023. Effective immediately.	Rep. Greenwood, LaToya (D)		
10200HB0840	EDUC-VETERAN-IN-STATE TUITION	03/02/2021	Assigned to Higher Education Committee	Amends various Acts relating to the governance of public universities in Illinois. Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year, requires the governing board of each public university to deem a spouse or dependent of a veteran an Illinois resident for tuition purposes if the spouse or dependent registers as an entering student in the university not later than 12 months after the date of the veteran's honorable discharge or separation from the armed forces of the United States or the Illinois National Guard. Provides that the spouse or dependent qualifies for in-state tuition at the university regardless of whether the spouse or dependent (i) has resided in Illinois long enough after the veteran's honorable discharge or separation from the armed forces of the United States or the Illinois National Guard to otherwise be deemed an Illinois resident for tuition purposes and (ii) resides in Illinois for the primary purpose of attending the university. Requires the spouse or dependent to provide satisfactory proof of the relationship between the spouse or dependent and the veteran to the university. Effective July 1, 2021.	Rep. LaPointe, Lindsey (D)	03/25/2021 12:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB1813	VETERANS-SUGGESTION BOX	03/09/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs to place in each Veterans Home and Veterans Service Office a locked suggestion box into which people may place comments and concerns to be addressed by the Department. Provides that only the Inspector General, or his or her designee, shall have access to the contents of the locked suggestion boxes, which must be checked once per week. Requires the Inspector General, or his or her designee, to review the contents of the locked suggestion box, find concerning items, and submit a report to the General Assembly each year outlining the issues and concerns found and the solution to each issue and concern.	Rep. Kifowit, Stephanie A. (D)		
10200HB1815	VETERANS' AILMENTS TASK FORCE	03/18/2021	Placed on Calendar 2nd Reading - Consent Calendar	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that the Veterans' Service-Related Ailments Task Force shall meet at least once every 2 months beginning July 1, 2021 (rather than beginning July 1, 2019). Effective immediately.	Rep. Kifowit, Stephanie A. (D)		
10200HB2369	DEPT VET AFF-JOINING FORCES	03/18/2021	Placed on Calendar 2nd Reading - Short Debate	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Allows specified actions to be performed by the designee of the Director of Veterans' Affairs. Provides that the Illinois Joining Forces Foundation shall (currently, may) be assisted in carrying out its functions by Department of Veterans' Affairs personnel, including legal professionals. Requires the Foundation's audit to be included in the Department's audit and to be prepared by the Department.	Rep. Kifowit, Stephanie A. (D)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB2378	PROP TX-SURVIVING SPOUSE	03/18/2021	To Property Tax Subcommittee	Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that, for the 2015 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year. Provides that, for the 2021 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to (i) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption in the current taxable year if he or she had survived and (ii) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected and who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Provides that, in the case of a surviving spouse who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, the property is exempt. Provides that the exemption carries over to the benefit of the veteran's adult or minor child if the child receives social security disability benefits or social security supplemental income because of a permanent disability and the veteran is deceased and the veteran's surviving spouse is deceased, remarries, or disclaims the exemption under this Section. Effective immediately.	Rep. Mason, Joyce (D)	03/25/2021 02:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB2391	PROP TX-SURVIVING SPOUSE	03/18/2021	To Property Tax Subcommittee	Amends the Property Tax Code. In a Section concerning the homestead exemption for veterans with disabilities, provides that: (1) for taxable years prior to 2015, "surviving spouse" means the surviving spouse of a veteran who obtained the exemption prior to his or her death; (2) for taxable years 2015 through 2020, "surviving spouse" means (A) the surviving spouse of a veteran who obtained the exemption prior to his or her death and (B) the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year; and (3) for taxable year 2021 and thereafter, "surviving spouse" means (A) the surviving spouse of a veteran who qualified for the exemption prior to his or her death, (B) the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year, (C) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption if he or she had survived, and (D) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected who is a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Effective immediately.	Rep. Kifowit, Stephanie A. (D)	03/25/2021 02:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL
10200HB2433	NURSING HOMES-COMPLAINTS	03/09/2021	Assigned to Human Services Committee	Amends the Nursing Home Care Act. Provides that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, a local health department may investigate a complaint against a facility within the local health department's jurisdiction.	Rep. Ness, Suzanne (D)		
10200HB2450	PROP TX-DISABLED VETERANS	03/18/2021	To Property Tax Subcommittee	Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that a veteran who has a service connected disability of 100% need not reapply for the homestead exemption for veterans with disabilities. Effective immediately.	Rep. Hammond, Norine K. (R)	03/25/2021 02:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL
10200HB2580	SCH CD-HIGHER ED SCHOLARSHIP	03/09/2021	Assigned to Appropriations-Higher Education Committee	Amends the Scholarships Article of the School Code. With respect to MIA/POW scholarships, expands the definition of "eligible veteran or serviceperson" to include any veteran or serviceperson who has been awarded the Purple Heart Medal.	Rep. Murphy, Mike (R)	03/26/2021 12:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB2628	VETERANS SUICIDE PREVENTION	03/18/2021	Placed on Calendar 2nd Reading - Short Debate	Creates the Veterans Suicide Prevention Commission Act. Creates the Veterans Suicide Prevention Commission. Provides that the Commission's purpose is to: (i) drive the State's strategic vision for assessing and achieving the successful transition, adjustment, and reintegration of service members of the armed forces, veterans, and their families through the coordination of the collective efforts of public and private organizations throughout the State; (ii) facilitate, collaborate, and coordinate the efforts of these organizations to effectively and responsively meet the needs of the military community; (iii) conduct planning, research, education, training, and evaluation activities to improve the operations and coordination of the systems of care and support; and (iv) coordinate its activities with those of Illinois Joining Forces and other advocacy organizations for service members of the armed forces, veterans, and their families. Contains provisions concerning the Commission's composition; term appointments; meetings; and other matters. Provides that the duties of the Commission are to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of those State programs and services related to the military community; promote coordination and efficiency among State, county, and local units of government and municipalities; issue periodic reports on its performance and progress in meeting its goals; monitor the progress of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Homelessness developed by specified federal agencies and other organizations; and other matters. Provides that the Commission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act.	Rep. Kifowit, Stephanie A. (D)		
10200HB2755	PROCUREMENT -QUINCY VET HOME	03/18/2021	Placed on Calendar 2nd Reading - Consent Calendar	Amends the Illinois Procurement Code. Provides that any contract for procurements entered into under the Quincy Veterans' Home Rehabilitation and Rebuilding Act and executed prior to the repeal of that Act shall continue in full force and effect after the repeal of that Act and until as otherwise dictated by the terms of the contract. Extends the repeal of a Section concerning the application of the Code to the Quincy Veterans' Home. Makes conforming changes. Effective immediately.	Rep. Kifowit, Stephanie A. (D)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB2770	PROCUREMENT -VETERAN SET-ASIDE	03/17/2021	To Procurement Subcommitee	Amends the Illinois Procurement Code. Provides that each chief procurement officer has authority to designate as veteran small business set-asides a fair proportion of construction, supply, and service contracts for awards to qualified service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses or veteran-owned small businesses. Provides further requirements concerning veteran small business set-aside designations. Requires each chief procurement officer to report to the General Assembly (currently, Department of Central Management Services) on specified information concerning qualified service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses and veteran-owned small businesses, and requires that the number of bids or offers will be delineated between contracts that were designated as set-aside and those that were not designated as set-aside. Makes other changes.	Rep. Vella, Dave (D)	03/24/2021 12:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL
10200HB2858	FOID-AGE-PARENTAL CONSENT	03/18/2021	To Firearms and Firearm Safety Subcommittee	Amends the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act. Lowers the age at which a person may apply for a Firearm Owner's Identification Card from 21 to 18 and provides that a person who is under that age may apply for a Firearm Owner's Identification Card without parental consent required if he or she is an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces. Amends the Firearm Concealed Carry Act. Provides that the Department of State Police shall issue a concealed carry license to an applicant who is at least 18 (currently, 21) years of age or is an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces.	Rep. Swanson, Daniel (R)	03/26/2021 02:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL
10200HB2862	SCH CD-MILITARY DEPNDT TUITION	03/09/2021	Assigned to Elementary & Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter School	Amends the School Code. Provides that if, at the time of enrollment, a dependent of United States military personnel is housed in temporary housing located outside of a school district, but will be living within the district within 6 months (instead of within 60 days), the dependent must be allowed to enroll and must not be charged tuition. Provides that United States military personnel shall provide proof within 6 months (instead of within 60 days) after the time of enrollment that the dependent will be living within the district. Effective immediately.	Rep. Swanson, Daniel (R)	03/24/2021 02:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB2893	QUINCY VETERAN HOME FOUNDATION	03/09/2021	Assigned to Executive Committee	Creates the Illinois Veterans' Home in Quincy Foundation Act. Authorizes the Secretary of State to create the Illinois Veterans' Home in Quincy Foundation. Provides further requirements concerning the establishment of the Foundation. Provides for officers of the Foundation. Provides that funds collected by the Foundation shall be used for private partnership projects that will support renovations to the Illinois Veterans Home in Quincy campus, Dudley House, and domiciliary buildings. Provides further requirements concerning Foundation funds. Provides for the adoption of rules. Provides purpose provisions.	Rep. Frese, Randy E. (R)		
10200HB2894	VETERANS GARDENING DAY	03/18/2021	Placed on Calendar 2nd Reading - Consent Calendar	Amends the State Commemorative Dates Act. Provides that the first Saturday in May of each year is designated as Veterans Gardening Day to be observed throughout the State as a day set apart in the honor and remembrance of veterans and as celebrated with appropriate activities.	Rep. Frese, Randy E. (R)		
10200HB2991	VETERANS' AFFAIRS-FIELD OFFICE	03/18/2021	Placed on Calendar 2nd Reading - Short Debate	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall establish a field office in each legislative district (rather than such field offices as it shall find necessary to enable it to perform its duties).	Rep. Lilly, Camille Y. (D)		
10200HB3255	VETERANS-SERVICE OFFICER	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that all service officers and any supervisors, including the field manager, within the field division must be an honorably discharged veteran from service in the Armed Forces of the United States.	Rep. Yednock, Lance (D)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB3273	GREEN ALERT PROGRAM	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Creates the Green Alert Program Act. Provides that each law enforcement agency shall implement a Green Alert Program for missing members of the Armed Forces. Provides that each law enforcement agency may adopt necessary rules to implement the Green Alert Program. Requires each law enforcement agency to adopt specified rules. Requires the Illinois State Police to adopt rules to assist investigating law enforcement agencies during their investigations as a resource for the receipt, analysis, and dissemination of information to those agencies that have a need and right to know about a missing member of the Armed Forces. Requires the Department of Transportation to adopt rules for the display on its variable message signs of appropriate information that may assist in the safe return of a missing member of the Armed Forces, consistent with applicable State and federal requirements. Provides that if an investigating law enforcement agency receives notice that an individual is a missing member of the Armed Forces, the agency shall solicit information from the family or legal guardian of the missing member of the Armed Forces to provide information regarding the physical or mental condition of the missing member of the Armed Forces. Requires the investigating law enforcement agency to notify the Illinois State Police of the missing member of the Armed Forces. Provides that the Illinois State Police shall make all the necessary notifications and assist the investigating law enforcement agency. Contains provisions regarding the cancellation of a Green Alert. Contains other provisions.	Rep. Manley, Natalie A. (D)		
10200HB3279	DEPT VET AFF-CNA TO LPN	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall establish a program to enable veterans who are certified nursing assistants to meet the requirements for practical nurse licensure under the Nurse Practice Act.	Rep. Howard, Terra Costa (D)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB3515	VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Amends the Military Veterans Assistance Act. Provides that if a post, camp, unit, chapter, ship, or detachment of a military veterans organization serves more than one county, then it shall be permitted to select one delegate and one alternate for the Veterans Assistance Commission in each county in which at least 25% of its members reside. Effective immediately.	Rep. Wheeler, Keith R. (R)		
10200HB3590	VETERANS ASSISTANCE-EXEMPTION	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Amends the Military Veterans Assistance Act. Provides that the county board of a county having a population of more than 3,000,000 may, but is not required to, enter into an intergovernmental agreement with and provide funding to the Veterans Assistance Commission of the county.	Rep. Evans, Jr., Marcus C. (D)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB3648	DEPT VET AFF-DISABILITY COMP	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Creates the Veterans' Disability Compensation Task Force to assess ways the State of Illinois can improve the rate at which disability compensation claims are approved by the federal government and correct the disparity between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' approval of disability compensation for Illinois veterans and that which is approved for veterans in other states. Provides that the Task Force shall consist of the chair and minority spokesperson of the Veterans' Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives, the chair and minority spokesperson of the Veterans Affairs Committee in the Senate, and 15 members appointed by the chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives and the chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee in the Senate. Requires those appointed to the Task Force to be members of different Illinois counties' Veterans Assistance Commissions, Veteran Service Officers, and VITAS officials. Provides that Task Force members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for any travel expenses incurred in attending meetings. Provides that within 60 days after the effective date of the amendatory Act, the Task Force shall meet, and thereafter shall meet at least quarterly. Requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide administrative and other support to the Task Force. Requires the Task Force to prepare a report that summarizes its work and makes recommendations resulting from its study. Provides that the Task Force shall submit the report of its findings and any recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before July 1, 2022. Repeals the amendatory Act's provisions on July 1, 2023. Effective immediately.	Rep. Meyers-Martin, Debbie (D)		
10200HB3716	VETS-IDOT-SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT	03/16/2021	Assigned to State Government Administration Committee	Amends the Veterans Preference Act. Provides that veterans shall be preferred for appointment to and employment with the Illinois Department of Transportation for the positions of snow removal operator and winter salaried highway maintainer under the Department's Winter Seasonal Employment Program.	Rep. Davidsmeyer, C.D. (R)	03/24/2021 12:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB3752	VETERANS DAY-FISHING LICENSE	03/16/2021	Assigned to Agriculture & Conservation Committee	Amends the Fish and Aquatic Life Code. Provides that each year the Director of Natural Resources may designate that Veterans Day, as federally designated, is a day when sport fishermen may fish waters wholly or in part within the jurisdiction of the State, including the part of Lake Michigan under the jurisdiction of the State, and not be required to obtain a license or stamp. Provides that the amendatory provisions shall not apply to commercial fishing.	Rep. Niemerg, Adam (R)		
10200HB3865	VET AFF-SERVICES DISCLOSURE	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that a person or company advertising veterans' benefits appeal services must conspicuously disclose in the advertisement that such services are also offered at no cost by county veterans service officers. Provides that a person who provides veterans' benefits services in exchange for compensation shall (i) provide a written disclosure statement to each client or prospective client and (ii) obtain the client's signature on a written disclosure statement containing an attestation by the client that the client has read and understands the written disclosure statement. Directs the Department of Veterans' Affairs to investigate alleged violations and to submit the results of any investigation to the Office of the Attorney General if the Department concludes that a violation has occurred. Provides that if, upon review, the Attorney General decides to file a complaint, the Attorney General must do so within 90 days of receiving the results of the Department's investigation. Imposes a civil penalty not to exceed $1,000 for each violation of the amendatory Act.	Rep. Walker, Mark L. (D)		
10200HB3930	PROP TX-VETERANS	03/16/2021	Assigned to Revenue & Finance Committee	Amends the Property Tax Code. In provisions concerning the homestead exemption for veterans with disabilities, provides that an otherwise qualified residence that is located upon 2 adjacent parcels in 2 different townships is entitled to the exemption. Provides that a portion of the maximum exemption amount shall be applied to each parcel according to each parcel's share of the total assessed value of the property. Effective immediately.	Rep. McCombie, Tony (R)	03/25/2021 02:00 PM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200HB3984	VETERAN BENEFIT-DISCHARGE TYPE	03/04/2021	Referred to Rules Committee	Amends the Statute on Statutes. Provides that, in determining the meaning of any statute or rule or interpretation by the various administrative agencies of this State, for purposes of determining eligibility for any veterans benefit available from the State, the words "honorable discharge" and "honorably discharged" include a discharge under other than honorable conditions due to post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, status as a survivor of sexual assault or harassment, LGBTQ-related issues, or mental health issues, but do not include a bad conduct discharge or a dishonorable discharge.	Rep. Mason, Joyce (D)		
10200HR0062	AUDIT-LASALLE VETS-COVID19	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee	Directs the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of the State's response to the management of the COVID-19 outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans' Home.	Rep. Welter, David A. (R)		
10200HR0082	ILLINOIS CAREGIVER DAY	03/16/2021	Assigned to Human Services Committee	Declares February 19, 2021 as Illinois Caregiver Day and express gratitude to Illinois caregivers for their unwavering commitment to the care of their clients and families especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Rep. Hurley, Frances Ann (D)		
10200SB0059	DFPR-WAIVE ACTIVE MILITARY FEE	03/09/2021	Placed on Calendar Order of 2nd Reading March 10, 2021	Amends the Department of Professional Regulation Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois. Provides that the Department shall waive all application fees and examination fees for active military personnel and their spouses. Provides that nothing in the provisions waives the requirement that the person or spouse meet all other licensing requirements, including other fees required during the licensing process.	Sen. Cullerton, Thomas (D)		
10200SB0091	VETERANS HOME ADMISSIONS	02/03/2021	Referred to Assignments	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that a veteran is entitled to admission to an Illinois Veterans Home if he or she has served in the National Guard or Reserve Forces of the United States and completed 20 years of satisfactory service, is otherwise eligible to receive reserve or active duty retirement benefits, and has been an Illinois resident for at least one year before applying for admission for purposes of eligibility for domiciliary care or nursing home care (currently, only domiciliary care). Effective immediately.	Sen. Tracy, Jil (R)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200SB0092	UNIV OF IL-VETERAN SCHOLARSHIP	03/03/2021	To Appropriations- Higher Education	Amends the University of Illinois Act. Provides that a county is entitled to a scholarship in the University of Illinois for the benefit of the children of persons who served in the armed forces of the United States until any time on or after August 2, 1990 and until Congress or the President orders that persons in service are no longer eligible for the Kosovo Campaign Medal or the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.	Sen. Tracy, Jil (R)		
10200SB0569	SCH CD-HIGH SCHOOL-ASVAB TEST	03/03/2021	Assigned to Education	Amends the School Code. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, requires a school district to provide to students enrolled in grades 10 through 12 the opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and consult with a military recruiter during regular school hours and in a location situated on school grounds.	Sen. Villivalam, Ram (D)		
10200SB0587	HIGHER ED-IL VETERAN GRANT	03/03/2021	To Appropriations- Higher Education	Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act with respect to the Illinois Veteran grant program. Provides that a grant recipient is not required to pay any tuition or mandatory fees while attending a State-controlled university or public community college in this State for a period that is based on the length of his or her active duty service, as verified on his or her U.S. Department of Defense form DD-214, calculated at specified credit hour rates (rather than for a period that is equivalent to 4 years of full-time enrollment, including summer terms). Provides that a grant may be transferred to a qualified dependent beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year. Amends the School Code to make a related change. Effective July 1, 2021.	Sen. Hastings, Michael E. (D)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200SB0611	BUSINESS ENTERPRISE-VETERANS	03/10/2021	To Executive- Procurement	Amends the Business Enterprise for Minorities, Women, and Persons with Disabilities Act. Modifies the provisions of the Act to apply to veterans and veteran-owned businesses. Modifies a Section concerning the short title. Changes the title of the Act to the Business Enterprise for Minorities, Women, Veterans, and Persons with Disabilities Act, and makes conforming changes throughout various statutes referencing the title of the Act. Amends the Illinois Procurement Code. Removes a provision concerning procurement preferences for veterans and veteran-owned businesses. Applies administrative penalties for falsely certified businesses to minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, and businesses owned by persons with a disability. Defines terms. Makes conforming changes in various statutes concerning minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, and businesses owned by persons with a disability. Effective immediately.	Sen. Wilcox, Craig (R)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200SB0687	PROCUREMENT -VETERAN CERT	03/09/2021	Assigned to Veterans Affairs	Amends the Illinois Procurement Code. Requires the Department of Central Management Services to submit an annual report concerning certifications issued to veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. Requires the Department to conduct a minimum of 2 outreach events per year to ensure that veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses know about the procurement opportunities and certification requirements with the State. Adds additional requirements concerning the certification program for veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. Provides that the Department of Central Management Services, in consultation with the Department of Veteran Affairs, may develop programs and agreements to encourage cities, counties, towns, townships, and other certifying entities to adopt uniform certification procedures and certification recognition programs. Provides that a business shall be certified by the Department of Central Management Services as a service-disabled veteran-owned small business or a veteran-owned small business if the Department determines that the business has been certified as a service-disabled veteran-owned small business or a veteran-owned small business by the Vets First Verification Program of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and the business has provided to the Department with specified information. Provides that the policies of the Department of Central Management Services regarding recognition of the Vets First Verification Program shall be reviewed annually. Effective immediately.	Sen. Hastings, Michael E. (D)		
10200SB1539	PROCUREMENT -QUINCY VET HOME	03/17/2021	Placed on Calendar Order of 2nd Reading March 23, 2021	Amends the Illinois Procurement Code. Provides that any contract for procurements entered into under the Quincy Veterans' Home Rehabilitation and Rebuilding Act and executed prior to the repeal of that Act shall continue in full force and effect after the repeal of that Act and until as otherwise dictated by the terms of the contract. Extends the repeal of a Section concerning the application of the Code to the Quincy Veterans' Home. Makes conforming changes. Effective immediately.	Sen. Muñoz, Antonio (D)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200SB1806	VETERAN REGISTRATION FEES	02/26/2021	Referred to Assignments	Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Provides that the standard registration fee for passenger motor vehicles of the first division and motor vehicles of the second division weighing not more than 8,000 pounds shall be waived for any vehicle owner who is a disabled veteran who holds proof of a service-connected disability from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.	Sen. Wilcox, Craig (R)		
10200SB2015	FACILITIES-COVID-19 VACCINE	02/26/2021	Referred to Assignments	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that the Department shall require each employee of a Veterans Home receive a vaccine for COVID-19 if offered. Amends the University of Illinois Hospital Act and the Hospital Licensing Act. Provides that each employee of a hospital who works in the hospital's intensive care unit must receive a vaccine for COVID-19 if offered. Amends the Nursing Home Care Act. Provides that each employee of a facility must receive a vaccine for COVID-19 if offered. Effective immediately.	Sen. Cullerton, Thomas (D)		
10200SB2017	SERVICE-RELATED AILMENTS	03/16/2021	Assigned to Veterans Affairs	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that the Veterans' Service-Related Ailments Task Force shall meet at least once every 2 months beginning on or before January 1, 2022 (rather than beginning July 1, 2019). Removes language requiring the Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Director's designee to serve as chairperson of the Task Force and replaces it with language providing that Task Force members shall select from among themselves a chairperson or co-chairpersons at the initial Task Force meeting. Provides that the Task Force shall submit a report of its findings to the Governor and General Assembly on or before June 1, 2023 (rather than December 31, 2020). Provides that the Task Force is dissolved, and the provisions repealed, on December 31, 2023 (rather than 2021). Effective immediately.	Sen. Cullerton, Thomas (D)		
10200SB2149	PEN CD-TRS-MILITARY SERVICE	03/16/2021	Assigned to Pensions	Amends the Downstate Teacher Article of the Illinois Pension Code. Provides that the 5-year limitation on the amount of service credit that may be granted for certain military service does not apply to up to 30 days per calendar year of annual training or to time spent in involuntary service, drill or battle assembly, or other mandatory training. Effective immediately.	Sen. Wilcox, Craig (R)	03/24/2021 10:00 AM	Virtual Room www.ilga.gov Springfield, IL

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200SB2160	EMERGENCY ESSENTIAL CAREGIVERS	03/16/2021	Assigned to Executive	Creates the Emergency Situation Essential Caregiver Act. Presents the findings of the General Assembly. Provides that during any emergency situation essential caregivers shall be allowed to visit residents in accordance with the Act. Provides that residents of a facility shall be allowed to designate up to 3 essential caregivers who will be allowed to visit and provide care in accordance with this Act in the event of an emergency. Provides that current residents of a facility must be allowed to designate up to 3 essential caregivers within 10 business days of the Act's effective date. Requires facilities to establish specified policies and procedures regarding the designation of essential caregivers, visitations by essential caregivers, and scheduling of such visits that will be in effect during the time of any emergency situation. Provides that residents who are unreasonably denied access to an essential caregiver are entitled to recover statutory damages from the facility of up to $10,000 per day that access is unreasonably denied. Contains an immunity provision for facilities, facility employees, or facility contractors who act in good faith to implement the Act's requirements. Provides that the Act may not be suspended or modified by Executive Order. Contains other provisions. Effective immediately.	Sen. Tracy, Jil (R)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200SB2250	VET BENEFIT FUND REPORTING	03/23/2021	Assigned to Veterans Affairs	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that each administrator of an Illinois Veterans Home who has an established locally-held member's benefits fund shall prepare and submit to the Department of Veterans' Affairs a monthly report of all donations received, including donations of a nonmonetary nature. Provides that the report shall include the end of month balance of the locally-held member's benefits fund. Provides that the Department shall prepare a quarterly report on all locally-held member's benefits funds from each Illinois Veterans Home. Provides that the report shall contain the amount of donations received for each veterans' home, including monetary and nonmonetary items, the expenditures and items dispersed, and the end of quarter balance of the locally-held member's benefits funds. Provides that the Department shall submit the quarterly report to the General Assembly and to the Governor and publish the report on its website.	Sen. Rezin, Sue (R)		
10200SB2251	DEPT VET AFF-OUTBREAK VISITS	03/23/2021	Assigned to Executive	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Defines "outbreak". Provides that if a Veterans Home administrator or a member of the administrative staff is notified that an outbreak has occurred, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Public Health shall conduct an onsite visit to assess the status of the spread and determine if any additional actions can be taken to lessen exposure to the disease. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs and Department of Public Health are to conduct the site visit as soon as practical, but in no event shall the visit be delayed later than the end of the next business day. Requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs to post specific information on its website upon conducting a site visit.	Sen. Rezin, Sue (R)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200SB2252	DEPT VET AFF-LASALLE AUDIT	03/23/2021	Assigned to Executive	Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Requires the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of the Department of Veterans' Affairs's and the Department of Public Health's management of the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans' Home. Provides that the performance audit shall include specified determinations. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Public Health, and any other State agency or other entity or person that may have information relevant to the audit shall cooperate fully and promptly with the Auditor General in the audit. Requires the Auditor General to commence the audit as soon as practical and report its findings and recommendations upon completion in accordance with the Illinois State Auditing Act. Repeals the provisions on December 31, 2021. Effective immediately.	Sen. Rezin, Sue (R)		
10200SB2253	PROP TX-VETERAN W/DISABILITY	03/23/2021	Assigned to Revenue	Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that, for taxable years 2022 and thereafter, in the case of a veteran with any service connected disability, the property is exempt from taxation under this Code. Removes a requirement that taxpayers receiving the homestead exemption for veterans with disabilities shall reapply on an annual basis. Effective immediately.	Sen. Anderson, Neil (R)		

Bill	Short Desc	Action Date	Last Action	ILGA Synopsis	Sponsors	Cmte Date	Cmte Locati
10200SB2559	PROP TX-SURVIVING SPOUSE	03/23/2021	Assigned to Revenue	Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that, for the 2015 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year. Provides that, for the 2021 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to (i) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption in the current taxable year if he or she had survived and (ii) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected and who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Provides that, in the case of a surviving spouse who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, the property is exempt. Effective immediately.	Sen. Bush, Melinda (D)		
10200SR0055	LASALLE VETERANS' HOME COVID	02/09/2021	Referred to Assignments	Directs the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Illinois Department of Public Health's management of the 2020 coronavirus outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans' Home.	Sen. Rezin, Sue (R)		

Is there a motion to recommend these to Veteran Service Organizations?

Vince Long:
Motion to proceed

Chairman Mike Peck:
Motion made and 2nd

All in favor say "I", opposed?

Motion carried

Any new business?

Stanley Olenjack:
It was brought to my attention earlier this week that bingo games are no longer allowed at the home as it is considered gambling.

Matt Eddington with IDVA reported that it is indeed gambling and they are not able to take part of that.

IDVA Legal:
If there is a situation where you are giving out a prize that is gambling and that is not permitted on state property. I can go back to the team and get more details. If no prizes were awarded, then it would not be an issue.

There may be a gray area, but it would be better to be safe and say no for the time being.

Stanley Olenjack:
Basically, what I was told is that a lot of language was put into a procedure that was not originally there. This is too much micro-management. Our responsibility is to make the life of the veteran as enjoyable as possible. This is our job and the bingo is a very popular game at our homes. So, this new rule just seems ridiculous.

IDVA Legal:
We can always submit something to the AG's office.

Chairman Mike Peck:
This is something that has been going on for many years, so I do not understand the change all of a sudden. We also do this at the federal facilities as well.

Myron Kirby:
Representing the American Legion, I believe we should ask for a variance. It is a nice activity and we need to continue.

Chairman Mike Peck:
Anyone else with new business?

Representative Swanson:
I just wanted to reach out and give a big "Thanks" to a couple of our local VFW's, American Legions and other veteran organizations for what they did and the money that

they raised for the televisions for our LaSalle veterans home. I think it is just wonderful and what a great gesture for what we have been through at LaSalle.

VSO's with their offices some closed and some open is very frustrating. I met with several veterans, chief of police and some mental health representatives in Princeton. We have a desert in that area, and I would like to get a VSO in the area.

Last topic if the Director could reach out on this one. It was brought to my attention that Uber and Lyft will not pick up a veteran if they have a service animal. This is completely disrespectful, and we need to have some changes made.

I think a call from the Director to those companies may be in order.

Chairman Mike Peck:
I would like at this moment to entertain a motion for the Director to write a letter to those companies.

Stanley Olenjack:
Motion made

Bill Wolff:
2nd motion

Chairman Mike Peck:
Any questions?

Tom Banning:
Representative Swanson please reach out to me on this issue. This is something that the AG's office can look into.

On the other issue at hand, IDVA can reach out and we can do a legal review, however we do not make exceptions to the law.

Chairman Mike Peck:
Representative Swanson, can you please get with Mr. Banning regarding the service dog issue.

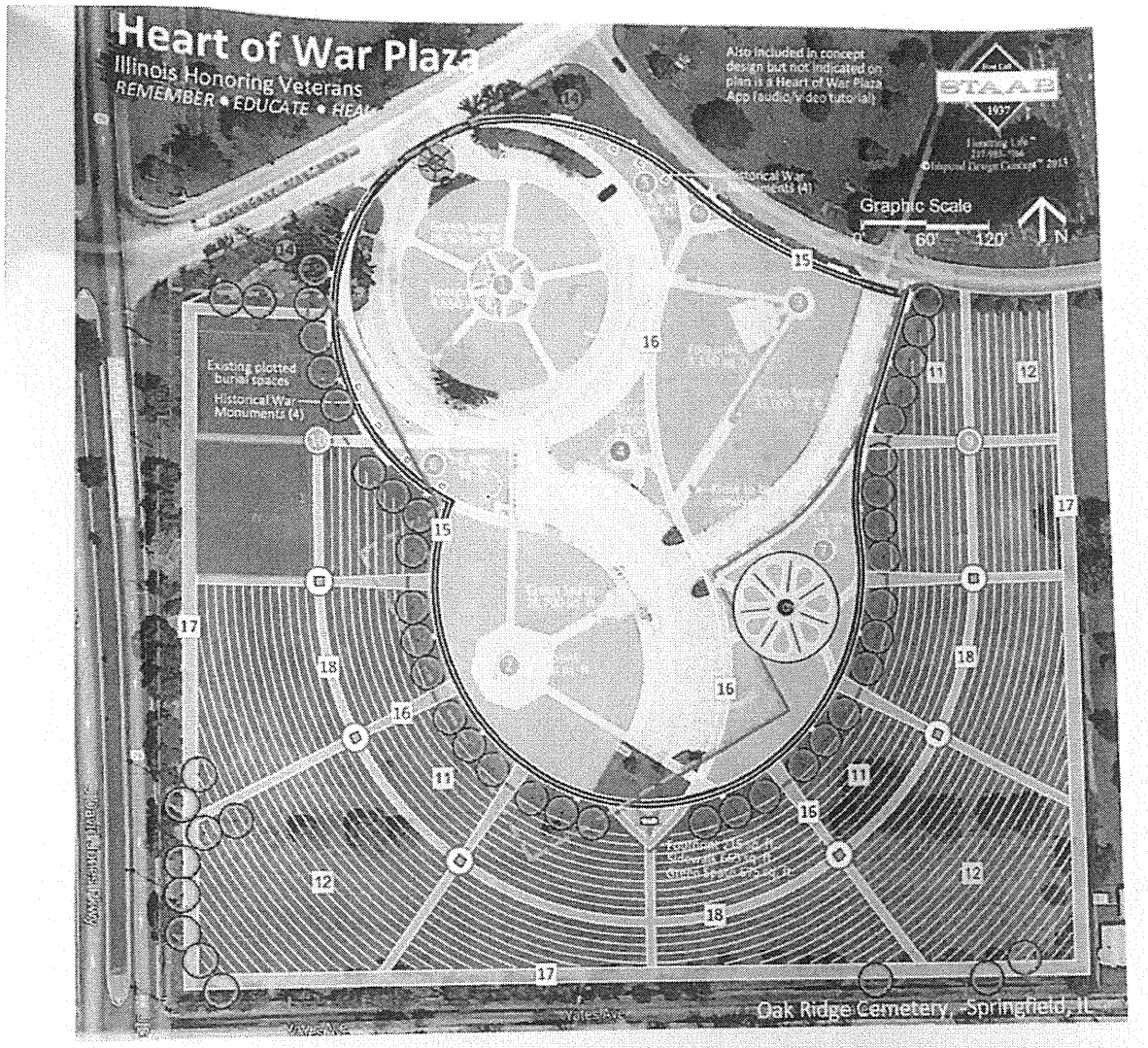
All in favor of the motion say "I", opposed?

Motion carried.

Quinn Triplett:
Kendall County will be bringing in the Middle East Conflict wall during Memorial Day.

Chairman Mike Peck:
With that said, I am asking for a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by: Jerry Field
2nd by: Bill Wolff
All in favor meeting adjourned
Next Meeting Date: June 9, 2021 – WebEx
Adjourn: Mike Peck, Chairman



Site Legend *Update August 2019*

✳ Indicates proposed site of future memorials - 56 proposed + 4 existing = 60 total

1. Vietnam Memorial 1988, Elv. 98.20 (footprint & green space 28,150 sq. ft.)
2. Korean Memorial 1996, Elv. 104.95 (footprint & green space 31,350 sq. ft.)
3. WWII Memorial 2004, Elv. 101.85 (footprint & green space 33,000 sq. ft.)
4. ✳ WWI Memorial (1) - Placement pending (footprint & green space 1,150 sq. ft.)
5. Purple Heart Memorial 2016, Elv. 100.00 (footprint & green 3,950 sq. ft.)
6. ✳ Grassy Area - Historic Wars (4) (3,860 sq. ft.)
7. ✳ Grassy Area - Historic Wars (4) (6,800 sq. ft.)
8. ✳ Grassy Area - Hands of Freedom (1) Elv. 102.70 (14,300 sq. ft.)

✳ Illinois Gold Star Memorial (1) Elv. 105.90 (footprint & grassy area, 1455 sq. ft.)

✳ Diplomacy Memorial (1)

✳ Home Front Memorial (1)

✳ Military Branch Memorials (6)

✳ Historic War Monuments (8)

✳ Gateway to Freedom (6 pairs) POW MIA KIA

✳ Broken Heart Memorial (11) PTSD Live With/Die From

✳ Seat of Remembrance Memorial (13)

11 Veterans/Family Burials (Flat Markers) 73,500 sq. ft. - approx. 2,200 burial spaces

12 Veterans/Family Burials (Upright Markers) 136,500 sq. ft. - approx. 4,100 burial spaces

14 Setback Green Space

15 Perimeter Walkway - Heart of War Plaza (1,835' black concrete sub base/black pavers)

16 Interconnect Pathways - Heart of War Plaza (2,325' natural concrete)

17 Perimeter Turf Walkway (12' wide) and Ornamental Fence (625' along street)

18 Turf Walkways (8' wide)

City of Springfield Property (Estimated 43,600 sq. ft./1+ acre)

State of IL Property Boundary (Estimated 225,760 sq. ft./5.18 acres)

Plotted Burial Spaces

We are still working on this project. We are trying to honor many wars and actions that the State of Illinois or the Northwest Territories have been involved with since The American Revolution with George Rogers Clark took Kaskaskia and the captures the Fort at Vincennes and stopped the British from coming up the Mississippi to resupply their forces. Since Lincoln's Tomb is here and he participated in several of these conflicts the Heart is pointed at Lincoln's Tomb. The Hands of Freedom (No 7 0n the main layout page) has seven Black Granite walls seven foot high to honor Desert Storm, Persian Gulf, War on Terrorism, Iraq, Afghanistan and others, including leaving a wall or two for future conflicts? This is where I would like the Statue of Freedom placed on piers where the 70 foot flag pole is shown. I still would like to see the 70 foot flag pole, but placed in the center of the Heart and have the Scouts as project fly the Star Spangled Banner on Memorial, 4th of July, Flag Day and Veterans Day each year. Also included are memorials for those that have the PTSD and other effects of service. Further we intend to honor each service including the diplomatic service. We still have quite a lot to do on this before we can finalize it. Then The cost of this is pretty large. Because more people visit Oak Ridge than any other than the Arlington National Cemetery. We are working with the Community Impact Project to get funding for this. The Veterans Memorial Foundation, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) foundation who will manage the project and maintaine the sites. The Manager of this Foundation is Joe Schaler our Purple Heart representitive on our Advisory Council. I have attached a letter from Joe about the Foundation and upto date support they have recieved on this project. Obviously with the situation we have in our National Goverment today we can't make any final predictions, but we do have some good letters of support.
Lou Myers

Community Impact Project – Springfield, Illinois

Funding is requested for the Heart of War Plaza project on the grounds of Oak Ridge Cemetery, the resting place of President Abraham Lincoln, located in Springfield, Illinois. This project will benefit the people of Illinois and the residents of the city of Springfield and surrounding Central Illinois communities. At the heart of this project are our veterans, whose service deserves to be honored and whose stories deserve to be told.

The Heart of War Plaza is located on approximately five acres of land owned by the State of Illinois at Oak Ridge Cemetery. This beautiful site will feature memorials to honor the service of veterans since the founding of our country. The architectural plan shows a series of memorials surrounded by beautiful landscaping and walkways. Throughout the site, benches for contemplation will allow visitors a place to honor and remember those who have served. Visitors can use an Ap to hear stories of veterans. Unemployed or marginalized veterans will be offered the opportunity to work on the teams that will prepare and maintain the grounds and the monuments.

The Veterans Memorial Foundation, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) foundation, will manage the project and maintain the sites. The foundation's purpose is:

TO PROMOTE the historical and educational value of what war memorials represent by recognizing and honoring the veterans who rendered faithful, loyal, heroic, and self-sacrificing service overseas and at home.

TO INSPIRE patriotism among the youth and community from stories of the veteran's willingness to serve and sacrifice to preserve our freedoms and way of life.

TO HONOR those who have served our country.

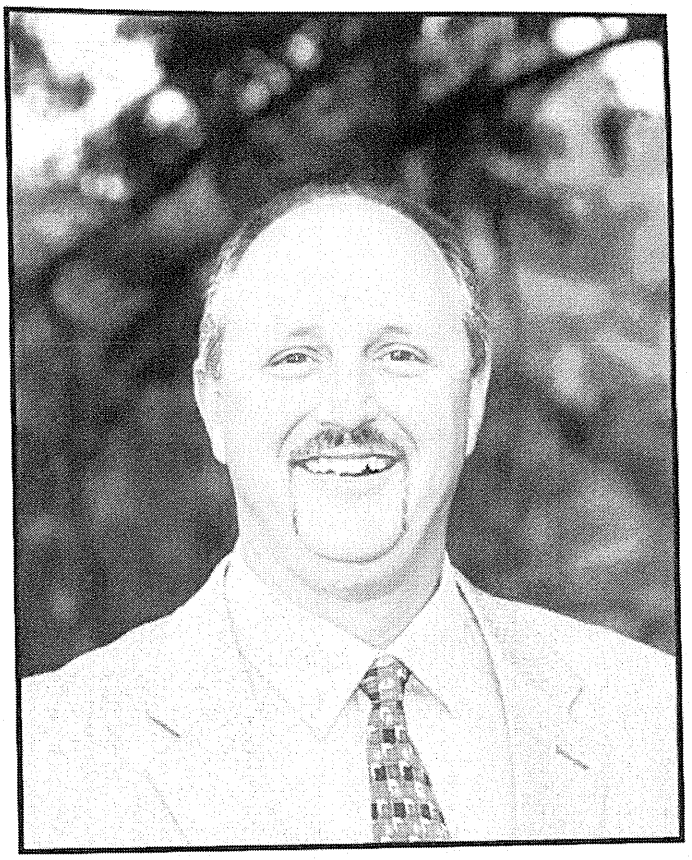
TO PRESERVE the integrity of existing war memorials.

TO BUILD a greater understanding of war memorial heritage among young people so that they can become the future custodians to promote, inspire, preserve, and provide for war memorial sites with public support.

Letters of support:
Senator Durbin
Senator Duckworth
Congressman Davis
Congressman LaHood
Governor Pritzker
Rep. Tim Butler
VFW State Commander Emmer

Administrator's Column

by Administrator Troy Culbertson



It's been said that the pessimist complains about the wind, the optimist expects it to change, but the realist adjusts the sails.

With great anticipation of spring, it feels as though our groundhog days could be behind us. And just in time as we realize that these long months of Covid isolation have kept projects out of the spotlight but quietly they have been turning in the background.

This was first recognized with the latest development of our cemetery grant enhancement project. Late last summer we feared our cemetery grant would slip away due to short deadlines and a long rebid process to get appropriate vendors on the project. However, as people continued to work from homes on their projects, we ended up with completed documents to review and a rebid schedule starting in March. This month we will be placing out for bid the raising and realignment of headstones in two sections of Sunset Cemetery. In a separate project we will be putting out for bid the construction of a material shed, a columbarium and a committal shelter. These will be wonderful improvements to the grounds which continues to show the commitment and dedication to our veteran's post humus.

We also just held the design build kick off meeting on the IVHQ campus rehabilitation and renovation project. Veterans United Contractors, which include Alberici Construction and River City Construction, met in Lippincott Hall with the Capital Development Board, IDVA and IVHQ staff. After receiving a signed contract, this was the initial meeting to lay out the process and deadlines for construction and begin setting the schedule for renovation on campus. We received an aggressive schedule for upcoming workshops to help design layout of the project. These meetings will be held in March and April. Concurrently, demolition plans are also being drafted with anticipated completion in May and demolition to begin right after that.

We have a great cause for celebration not only with these projects restarting but also because we are experiencing great outcomes with COVID-19 at this time. We experienced a great number of Covid cases among staff and residents in November and December. With the recession in cases, similar to the community of Quincy, we have met the guidelines allowing us to move into phase 2 identified in the long-term care reopening guidelines issued by IDPH. This guidance is based on the community positivity rate and the date of our last case on campus. Having no COVID-19 cases remaining on campus, we are able to move into phase 2 which allows for scheduled visitations for family members and small group activities of ten or less. If you are interested in visiting a family member, please call the unit social services department for available scheduling times.

And finally, we salute Adams County Public Health Department for making the Covid vaccine available to us well in advance of the federal distribution program. We were able to vaccinate residents as early as December 24. To date, 97.5% of our residents are completely vaccinated. I also congratulate our nursing supervisors and truck garage staff as they have worked diligently in our testing center. Our unit supervisors have swabbed residents and employees twice a week for the last 90 days in addition to their normal duties. Our truck garage staff has driven samples to Springfield and Carbondale laboratories as much as four times a week in addition to daily meal deliveries and snow removal. The dedicated members of these teams adjusted their sails!