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HOUSE BILL NO. 1739

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 4, 2025

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 69, consisting of sections numbered 30-447 through 30-453, relating to General Assembly Military and Veterans Commission established.*

Patrons—Reid, Cherry and Glass

Referred to Committee on Rules

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 69, consisting of sections numbered 30-447 through 30-453, as follows:

CHAPTER 69.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS COMMISSION.

§ 30-447. General Assembly Military and Veterans Commission; purpose.

The General Assembly Military and Veterans Commission (the Commission) is established in the legislative branch of state government. The purpose of the Commission is to review legislation related to veterans, military service members, and their families and advise on how such legislation aligns with the 2024 Veterans Strategic Plan developed by the Department of Veterans Services.

§ 30-448. Membership; terms; vacancies; chairman and vice-chairman.

The Commission shall consist of 16 legislative members, appointed as follows: eight members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates and eight members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. All members appointed shall either (i) be a veteran or military service member or the spouse of a veteran or military service member or (ii) represent a district with a significant military or veteran population relative to the rest of the Commonwealth. Any other member of the General Assembly may choose to serve on the Commission but shall serve ex officio without voting privileges.

The Commission shall select a member of the House of Delegates and a member of the Senate to serve as co-chairmen for terms of two years.

§ 30-449. Quorum; meetings; voting on recommendations.

A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the Commission shall be held at the call of the co-chairmen or whenever the majority of the members so request.

No recommendation of the Commission shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the Commission (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the Commission.

§ 30-450. Compensation; expenses.

Legislative members appointed to the Commission shall receive such compensation as provided in § 30-19.12 and shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825.

§ 30-451. Powers and duties of the Commission.

The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- 1. Meet weekly during any regular session of the General Assembly and quarterly in the interim;*
- 2. Review and analyze proposed legislation and budget amendments to ensure alignment with the priorities outlined in the 2024 Veterans Strategic Plan developed by the Department of Veterans Services;*
- 3. Revise and update, on a three-year cycle, the goals and priorities set out in the 2024 Veterans Strategic Plan developed by the Department of Veterans Services;*
- 4. Report annually to the General Assembly on the status of the Veterans Strategic Plan and any recommendations for updating the goals or priorities set out in such Plan; and*
- 5. Host an annual Military Appreciation Night, which shall be funded using gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other private funds.*

§ 30-452. Staffing.

Administrative staff support shall be provided jointly by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates and the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. The Division of Legislative Services shall provide legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the Commission.

§ 30-453. Co-chairmen's executive summary of activity and work of the Commission.

The co-chairmen shall submit to the General Assembly and the Governor an annual executive summary of

59 *the interim activity and work of the Commission no later than the first day of each regular session of the*
60 *General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division*
61 *of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted*
62 *on the General Assembly's website.*

63 **2. That, for its first year of existence, if the General Assembly Military and Veterans Commission (the**
64 **Commission) is not funded by a separate appropriation in the appropriation act, the Commission may**
65 **be funded from the operating budgets of the Clerk of the House of Delegates and the Clerk of the**
66 **Senate upon the approval of the Joint Rules Committee. If the Commission is not funded by a separate**
67 **appropriation in the appropriation act for any year thereafter, this chapter shall expire on July 1 of the**
68 **fiscal year in which the Commission fails to receive such funding.**