

AN ACT

To amend sections 121.02, 121.03, 2311.07, 2311.08, 2743.03, 3313.616, 3319.13, 4112.01, 5901.02, 5901.021, 5901.07, 5901.09, 5902.01, 5902.02, 5902.03, 5902.04, 5902.06, 5902.07, 5902.08, 5902.15, 5903.02, 5903.99, 5904.01, 5907.01, 5907.02, 5907.022, 5907.023, 5907.03, 5907.04, 5907.11, 5907.12, 5907.13, 5907.141, 5910.02, and 5923.05, to enact sections 2743.091, 5533.871, and 5902.09, and to repeal sections 124.29, 5902.05, and 5903.01 of the Revised Code to create a Department of Veterans Services and a Director of Veterans Services, to create duties for the department and the director, to transfer the duties of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs to the department, to place the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency and the Ohio War Orphans Scholarship Board under the department, to establish specified employment rights for private sector employees in the uniformed services, to permit a person aggrieved under the federal "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act" to file a claim against the person's employer in a state court, to require the clerk of the court to give the action priority on the court's dockets, to prohibit the court from requiring a plaintiff to pay court costs, and to designate State Route 660 in Guernsey County as the "Major James W. Reed Memorial Highway."

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That sections 121.02, 121.03, 2311.07, 2311.08, 2743.03, 3313.616, 3319.13, 4112.01, 5901.02, 5901.021, 5901.07, 5901.09, 5902.01, 5902.02, 5902.03, 5902.04, 5902.06, 5902.07, 5902.08, 5902.15, 5903.02, 5903.99, 5904.01, 5907.01, 5907.02, 5907.022, 5907.023, 5907.03, 5907.04, 5907.11, 5907.12, 5907.13, 5907.141, 5910.02, and 5923.05 be amended and that sections 2743.091, 5533.871, and 5902.09 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 121.02. The following administrative departments and their respective directors are hereby created:

(A) The office of budget and management, which shall be administered by the director of budget and management;

(B) The department of commerce, which shall be administered by the director of commerce;

(C) The department of administrative services, which shall be administered by the director of administrative services;

(D) The department of transportation, which shall be administered by the director of transportation;

(E) The department of agriculture, which shall be administered by the director of agriculture;

(F) The department of natural resources, which shall be administered by the director of natural resources;

(G) The department of health, which shall be administered by the director of health;

(H) The department of job and family services, which shall be administered by the director of job and family services;

(I) Until July 1, 1997, the department of liquor control, which shall be administered by the director of liquor control;

(J) The department of public safety, which shall be administered by the director of public safety;

(K) The department of mental health, which shall be administered by the director of mental health;

(L) The department of mental retardation and developmental disabilities, which shall be administered by the director of mental retardation and developmental disabilities;

(M) The department of insurance, which shall be administered by the superintendent of insurance as director thereof;

(N) The department of development, which shall be administered by the director of development;

(O) The department of youth services, which shall be administered by

the director of youth services;

(P) The department of rehabilitation and correction, which shall be administered by the director of rehabilitation and correction;

(Q) The environmental protection agency, which shall be administered by the director of environmental protection;

(R) The department of aging, which shall be administered by the director of aging;

(S) The department of alcohol and drug addiction services, which shall be administered by the director of alcohol and drug addiction services;

(T) The department of veterans services, which shall be administered by the director of veterans services.

The director of each department shall exercise the powers and perform the duties vested by law in such department.

Sec. 121.03. The following administrative department heads shall be appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate, and shall hold their offices during the term of the appointing governor, and are subject to removal at the pleasure of the governor.

(A) The director of budget and management;

(B) The director of commerce;

(C) The director of transportation;

(D) The director of agriculture;

(E) The director of job and family services;

(F) Until July 1, 1997, the director of liquor control;

(G) The director of public safety;

(H) The superintendent of insurance;

(I) The director of development;

(J) The tax commissioner;

(K) The director of administrative services;

(L) The director of natural resources;

(M) The director of mental health;

(N) The director of mental retardation and developmental disabilities;

(O) The director of health;

(P) The director of youth services;

(Q) The director of rehabilitation and correction;

(R) The director of environmental protection;

(S) The director of aging;

(T) The director of alcohol and drug addiction services;

(U) The administrator of workers' compensation who meets the qualifications required under division (A) of section 4121.121 of the Revised Code;

(V) The director of veterans services who meets the qualifications required under section 5902.01 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 2311.07. Cases in which there is an issue of fact or damages to be assessed shall be tried in the order in which they stand on the trial docket, unless by the consent of parties, or by the order of the court, they are continued or placed at the end of the docket, or for good cause shown are especially assigned for trial or hearing out of their regular order. Actions for wages and actions pursuant to section 5903.02 of the Revised Code shall be first in order for trial.

Sec. 2311.08. The court may assign for trial the cases triable to a jury, in a series, in the order in which they stand upon the docket, giving preference always to actions for wages, actions pursuant to section 5903.02 of the Revised Code, and cases not triable to a jury, in a series in like manner. All other cases shall be heard in the order in which they stand upon the trial docket, unless the court otherwise directs.

Sec. 2743.03. (A)(1) There is hereby created a court of claims. The court of claims is a court of record and has exclusive, original jurisdiction of all civil actions against the state permitted by the waiver of immunity contained in section 2743.02 of the Revised Code, exclusive jurisdiction of the causes of action of all parties in civil actions that are removed to the court of claims, and jurisdiction to hear appeals from the decisions of the court of claims commissioners. The court shall have full equity powers in all actions within its jurisdiction and may entertain and determine all counterclaims, cross-claims, and third-party claims.

(2) If the claimant in a civil action as described in division (A)(1) of this section also files a claim for a declaratory judgment, injunctive relief, or other equitable relief against the state that arises out of the same circumstances that gave rise to the civil action described in division (A)(1) of this section, the court of claims has exclusive, original jurisdiction to hear and determine that claim in that civil action. This division does not affect, and shall not be construed as affecting, the original jurisdiction of another court of this state to hear and determine a civil action in which the sole relief that the claimant seeks against the state is a declaratory judgment, injunctive relief, or other equitable relief.

(3) In addition to its exclusive, original jurisdiction as conferred by division (A)(1) and (2) of this section, the court of claims has exclusive, original jurisdiction as described in division (F) of section 2743.02 ~~and~~, division (B) of section 3335.03, and division (C) of section 5903.02 of the Revised Code.

(B) The court of claims shall sit in Franklin county, its hearings shall be

public, and it shall consist of incumbent justices or judges of the supreme court, courts of appeals, or courts of common pleas, or retired justices or judges eligible for active duty pursuant to division (C) of Section 6 of Article IV, Ohio Constitution, sitting by temporary assignment of the chief justice of the supreme court. The chief justice may direct the court to sit in any county for cases on removal upon a showing of substantial hardship and whenever justice dictates.

(C)(1) A civil action against the state shall be heard and determined by a single judge. Upon application by the claimant or the state, the chief justice of the supreme court may assign a panel of three judges to hear and determine a civil action presenting novel or complex issues of law or fact. Concurrence of two members of the panel is necessary for any judgment or order.

(2) Whenever the chief justice of the supreme court believes an equitable resolution of a case will be expedited, ~~he~~ the chief justice may appoint referees in accordance with Civil Rule 53 to hear the case.

(3) When any dispute under division (B) of section 153.12 of the Revised Code is brought to the court of claims, upon request of either party to the dispute, the chief justice of the supreme court shall appoint a single referee or a panel of three referees. The referees need not be attorneys, but shall be persons knowledgeable about construction contract law, a member of the construction industry panel of the American arbitration association, or an individual or individuals deemed qualified by the chief justice to serve. No person shall serve as a referee if that person has been employed by an affected state agency or a contractor or subcontractor involved in the dispute at any time in the preceding five years. Proceedings governing referees shall be in accordance with Civil Rule 53, except as modified by this division. The referee or panel of referees shall submit its report, which shall include a recommendation and finding of fact, to the judge assigned to the case by the chief justice, within thirty days of the conclusion of the hearings. Referees appointed pursuant to this division shall be compensated on a per diem basis at the same rate as is paid to judges of the court and also shall be paid their expenses. If a single referee is appointed or a panel of three referees is appointed, then, with respect to one referee of the panel, the compensation and expenses of the referee shall not be taxed as part of the costs in the case but shall be included in the budget of the court. If a panel of three referees is appointed, the compensation and expenses of the two remaining referees shall be taxed as costs of the case.

All costs of a case shall be apportioned among the parties. The court may not require that any party deposit with the court cash, bonds, or other

security in excess of two hundred dollars to guarantee payment of costs without the prior approval in each case of the chief justice.

(4) An appeal from a decision of the court of claims commissioners shall be heard and determined by one judge of the court of claims.

(D) The Rules of Civil Procedure shall govern practice and procedure in all actions in the court of claims, except insofar as inconsistent with this chapter. The supreme court may promulgate rules governing practice and procedure in actions in the court as provided in Section 5 of Article IV, Ohio Constitution.

(E)(1) A party who files a counterclaim against the state or makes the state a third-party defendant in an action commenced in any court, other than the court of claims, shall file a petition for removal in the court of claims. The petition shall state the basis for removal, be accompanied by a copy of all process, pleadings, and other papers served upon the petitioner, and shall be signed in accordance with Civil Rule 11. A petition for removal based on a counterclaim shall be filed within twenty-eight days after service of the counterclaim of the petitioner. A petition for removal based on third-party practice shall be filed within twenty-eight days after the filing of the third-party complaint of the petitioner.

(2) Within seven days after filing a petition for removal, the petitioner shall give written notice to the parties, and shall file a copy of the petition with the clerk of the court in which the action was brought originally. The filing effects the removal of the action to the court of claims, and the clerk of the court where the action was brought shall forward all papers in the case to the court of claims. The court of claims shall adjudicate all civil actions removed. The court may remand a civil action to the court in which it originated upon a finding that the removal petition does not justify removal, or upon a finding that the state is no longer a party.

(3) Bonds, undertakings, or security and injunctions, attachments, sequestrations, or other orders issued prior to removal remain in effect until dissolved or modified by the court of claims.

Sec. 2743.091. If a person brings an action in the court of claims pursuant to section 5903.02 of the Revised Code or section 4323 of the "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994," 108 Stat. 3149, 38 U.S.C. 4301, et seq., the clerk of the court of claims shall give the action priority on the court of claims' dockets.

Sec. 3313.616. (A) Notwithstanding the requirements of sections 3313.61, 3313.611, and 3313.612 of the Revised Code, the board of education of any city, exempted village, or local school district or the governing authority of any chartered nonpublic school may grant a high

school diploma to any veteran of World War II, the Korean conflict, or the Vietnam conflict who is a resident of this state or who was previously enrolled in any high school in this state if all of the following apply:

(1) The veteran either:

(a) Left a public or nonpublic school located in any state prior to graduation in order to serve in the armed forces of the United States;

(b) Left a public or nonpublic school located in any state prior to graduation due to family circumstances and subsequently entered the armed forces of the United States.

(2) The veteran received an honorable discharge from the armed forces of the United States.

(3) The veteran has not been granted a diploma as provided in section 3313.61 or 3313.612 of the Revised Code, a diploma of adult education as provided in section 3313.611 of the Revised Code, or a diploma under this section.

(B) Notwithstanding the requirements of sections 3313.61, 3313.611, and 3313.612 of the Revised Code, the board of education of any city, exempted village, or local school district or the governing authority of any chartered nonpublic school may grant a high school diploma to any woman who left high school during World War II, the Korean conflict, or the Vietnam conflict and who is a resident of this state or was previously enrolled in any high school in this state, if both of the following apply:

(1) The woman either:

(a) Left a public or nonpublic school located in any state prior to graduation in order to join the workforce to support her family or to join the war effort;

(b) Left a public or nonpublic school located in any state prior to graduation due to family circumstances and subsequently joined the workforce or war effort.

(2) The woman has not been granted a diploma as provided in section 3313.61 or 3313.612 of the Revised Code, a diploma of adult education as provided in section 3313.611 of the Revised Code, or a diploma under this section.

(C) If a person who would otherwise qualify for a diploma under this section is deceased, the board of education of any school district or the governing authority of any chartered nonpublic school may award such diploma to the person posthumously and may present that diploma to a living relative of the person.

(D) The ~~governor's office~~ department of ~~veterans' affairs~~ veterans services, in accordance with section 111.15 of the Revised Code, and with

the advice and consent of the veterans advisory committee established under division (K) of section 5902.02 of the Revised Code, shall develop and adopt rules to implement this section. Such rules shall include, but not be limited to, rules establishing procedures for application and verification of eligible persons for a diploma under this section.

Sec. 3319.13. Upon the written request of a teacher or a regular nonteaching school employee, a board of education may grant a leave of absence for a period of not more than two consecutive school years for educational, professional, or other purposes, and shall grant such leave where illness or other disability is the reason for the request. Upon subsequent request, such leave may be renewed by the board. Without request, a board may grant similar leave of absence and renewals thereof to any teacher or regular nonteaching school employee because of physical or mental disability, but such teacher may have a hearing on such unrequested leave of absence or its renewals in accordance with section 3319.16 of the Revised Code, and such nonteaching school employee may have a hearing on such unrequested leave of absence or its renewals in accordance with division (C) of section 3319.081 of the Revised Code. Upon the return to service of a teacher or a nonteaching school employee at the expiration of a leave of absence, the teacher or nonteaching school employee shall resume the contract status that the teacher or nonteaching school employee held prior to the leave of absence. Any teacher who leaves a teaching position for service in the uniformed services and who returns from service in the uniformed services that is terminated in a manner other than as described in section 4304 of Title 38 of the United States Code, "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994," 108 Stat. 3149, 38 U.S.C.A. 4304, shall resume the contract status held prior to entering the uniformed services, subject to passing a physical examination by an individual authorized by the Revised Code to conduct physical examinations, including a physician assistant, a clinical nurse specialist, a certified nurse practitioner, or a certified nurse-midwife. Any written documentation of the physical examination shall be completed by the individual who conducted the examination. Such contract status shall be resumed at the first of the school semester or the beginning of the school year following return from the uniformed services. For purposes of this section and section 3319.14 of the Revised Code, "uniformed services" and "service in the uniformed services" have the same meanings as defined in section ~~5903.04~~ 5923.05 of the Revised Code.

Upon the return of a nonteaching school employee from a leave of absence, the board may terminate the employment of a person hired

exclusively for the purpose of replacing the returning employee while the returning employee was on leave. If, after the return of a nonteaching employee from leave, the person employed exclusively for the purpose of replacing an employee while the employee was on leave is continued in employment as a regular nonteaching school employee or if the person is hired by the board as a regular nonteaching school employee within a year after employment as a replacement is terminated, the person shall, for purposes of section 3319.081 of the Revised Code, receive credit for the person's length of service with the school district during such replacement period in the following manner:

(A) If employed as a replacement for less than twelve months, the person shall be employed under a contract valid for a period equal to twelve months less the number of months employed as a replacement. At the end of such contract period, if the person is reemployed it shall be under a two-year contract. Subsequent reemployment shall be pursuant to division (B) of section 3319.081 of the Revised Code.

(B) If employed as a replacement for twelve months or more but less than twenty-four months, the person shall be employed under a contract valid for a period equal to twenty-four months less the number of months employed as a replacement. Subsequent reemployment shall be pursuant to division (B) of section 3319.081 of the Revised Code.

(C) If employed as a replacement for more than twenty-four months, the person shall be employed pursuant to division (B) of section 3319.081 of the Revised Code.

For purposes of this section, employment during any part of a month shall count as employment during the entire month.

Sec. 4112.01. (A) As used in this chapter:

(1) "Person" includes one or more individuals, partnerships, associations, organizations, corporations, legal representatives, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy, receivers, and other organized groups of persons. "Person" also includes, but is not limited to, any owner, lessor, assignor, builder, manager, broker, salesperson, appraiser, agent, employee, lending institution, and the state and all political subdivisions, authorities, agencies, boards, and commissions of the state.

(2) "Employer" includes the state, any political subdivision of the state, any person employing four or more persons within the state, and any person acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer.

(3) "Employee" means an individual employed by any employer but does not include any individual employed in the domestic service of any person.

(4) "Labor organization" includes any organization that exists, in whole or in part, for the purpose of collective bargaining or of dealing with employers concerning grievances, terms or conditions of employment, or other mutual aid or protection in relation to employment.

(5) "Employment agency" includes any person regularly undertaking, with or without compensation, to procure opportunities to work or to procure, recruit, refer, or place employees.

(6) "Commission" means the Ohio civil rights commission created by section 4112.03 of the Revised Code.

(7) "Discriminate" includes segregate or separate.

(8) "Unlawful discriminatory practice" means any act prohibited by section 4112.02, 4112.021, or 4112.022 of the Revised Code.

(9) "Place of public accommodation" means any inn, restaurant, eating house, barbershop, public conveyance by air, land, or water, theater, store, other place for the sale of merchandise, or any other place of public accommodation or amusement of which the accommodations, advantages, facilities, or privileges are available to the public.

(10) "Housing accommodations" includes any building or structure, or portion of a building or structure, that is used or occupied or is intended, arranged, or designed to be used or occupied as the home residence, dwelling, dwelling unit, or sleeping place of one or more individuals, groups, or families whether or not living independently of each other; and any vacant land offered for sale or lease. "Housing accommodations" also includes any housing accommodations held or offered for sale or rent by a real estate broker, salesperson, or agent, by any other person pursuant to authorization of the owner, by the owner, or by the owner's legal representative.

(11) "Restrictive covenant" means any specification limiting the transfer, rental, lease, or other use of any housing accommodations because of race, color, religion, sex, military status, familial status, national origin, disability, or ancestry, or any limitation based upon affiliation with or approval by any person, directly or indirectly, employing race, color, religion, sex, military status, familial status, national origin, disability, or ancestry as a condition of affiliation or approval.

(12) "Burial lot" means any lot for the burial of deceased persons within any public burial ground or cemetery, including, but not limited to, cemeteries owned and operated by municipal corporations, townships, or companies or associations incorporated for cemetery purposes.

(13) "Disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including the functions

of caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working; a record of a physical or mental impairment; or being regarded as having a physical or mental impairment.

(14) Except as otherwise provided in section 4112.021 of the Revised Code, "age" means at least forty years old.

(15) "Familial status" means either of the following:

(a) One or more individuals who are under eighteen years of age and who are domiciled with a parent or guardian having legal custody of the individual or domiciled, with the written permission of the parent or guardian having legal custody, with a designee of the parent or guardian;

(b) Any person who is pregnant or in the process of securing legal custody of any individual who is under eighteen years of age.

(16)(a) Except as provided in division (A)(16)(b) of this section, "physical or mental impairment" includes any of the following:

(i) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine;

(ii) Any mental or psychological disorder, including, but not limited to, mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities;

(iii) Diseases and conditions, including, but not limited to, orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, human immunodeficiency virus infection, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction, and alcoholism.

(b) "Physical or mental impairment" does not include any of the following:

(i) Homosexuality and bisexuality;

(ii) Transvestism, transsexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, gender identity disorders not resulting from physical impairments, or other sexual behavior disorders;

(iii) Compulsive gambling, kleptomania, or pyromania;

(iv) Psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from the current illegal use of a controlled substance or the current use of alcoholic beverages.

(17) "Dwelling unit" means a single unit of residence for a family of one or more persons.

(18) "Common use areas" means rooms, spaces, or elements inside or

outside a building that are made available for the use of residents of the building or their guests, and includes, but is not limited to, hallways, lounges, lobbies, laundry rooms, refuse rooms, mail rooms, recreational areas, and passageways among and between buildings.

(19) "Public use areas" means interior or exterior rooms or spaces of a privately or publicly owned building that are made available to the general public.

(20) "Controlled substance" has the same meaning as in section 3719.01 of the Revised Code.

(21) "Disabled tenant" means a tenant or prospective tenant who is a person with a disability.

(22) "Military status" means a person's status in "service in the uniformed services" as defined in section ~~5903.04~~ 5923.05 of the Revised Code.

(B) For the purposes of divisions (A) to (F) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code, the terms "because of sex" and "on the basis of sex" include, but are not limited to, because of or on the basis of pregnancy, any illness arising out of and occurring during the course of a pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Women affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions shall be treated the same for all employment-related purposes, including receipt of benefits under fringe benefit programs, as other persons not so affected but similar in their ability or inability to work, and nothing in division (B) of section 4111.17 of the Revised Code shall be interpreted to permit otherwise. This division shall not be construed to require an employer to pay for health insurance benefits for abortion, except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or except where medical complications have arisen from the abortion, provided that nothing in this division precludes an employer from providing abortion benefits or otherwise affects bargaining agreements in regard to abortion.

Sec. 5533.871. The road known as state route number six hundred sixty, located within Guernsey county, shall be known as the "Major James W. Reed Memorial Highway."

The director of transportation may erect suitable markers along the highway indicating its name.

Sec. 5901.02. In each county there shall be a commission known as "the veterans service commission." Except as provided in section 5901.021 of the Revised Code, the commission shall be composed of five residents of the county appointed to five-year terms by a judge of the court of common pleas. At the time of appointment or reappointment to the commission, no

commission member appointed under this section shall be an employee of the commission or hold an elective or other appointive office of the county served by the commission.

Each member of the commission appointed under this section shall be an honorably discharged or honorably separated veteran. Within sixty days after the date of appointment, each such member shall file the member's form DD214 with the ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services in accordance with guidelines established by the director of that ~~office~~ department. Such appointments shall be made from lists of recommended persons, in the manner specified in the following paragraph. One person shall be a representative recommended by the American Legion; one person shall be a representative recommended by the Veterans of Foreign Wars; one person shall be a representative recommended by the Disabled American Veterans; one person shall be a representative recommended by the AMVETS; and one person shall be a representative recommended by the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., the Vietnam Veterans of America, or the Korean War Veterans Association. If any such organization has no post or chapter located in the county, the appointment shall be made from lists of recommended persons submitted by posts or chapters of any other congressionally chartered veterans organizations located in the county. If no such other organizations have posts or chapters located in the county, the judge responsible for making appointments under this section may appoint any qualified veteran to represent the veteran community.

On or before the fifteenth day of October of each year, the appointing judge shall notify each post or chapter of each organization within the county from which the member may or must be appointed that it may submit a list containing three recommendations of persons who are eligible for appointment. If the judge does not receive any recommendations within sixty days after providing the required notification, the judge may appoint any qualified veteran to represent the veteran community. The judge shall make the appointment on or before the fifteenth day of January of each year. Any vacancy in a membership appointed under this section shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

Beginning in the year 2000, appointment of members to the commission under this section shall be made as follows:

(A) Appointments for members to represent the American Legion shall be made for terms to commence in years ending in zero and five.

(B) Appointments for members to represent the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall be made for terms to commence in years ending in one and six.

(C) Appointments for members to represent the Disabled American Veterans shall be made for terms to commence in years ending in two and seven.

(D) Appointments for members to represent the AMVETS shall be made for terms to commence in years ending in three and eight.

(E) Appointments for members to represent the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., the Vietnam Veterans of America, or the Korean War Veterans Association shall be made for terms to commence in years ending in four and nine.

The terms immediately preceding the initial appointments made under divisions (A) to (E) of this section may be for periods of less than five years.

The appointing authority shall remove a member who fails to maintain certification or whose certification is revoked by the director of veterans services.

Sec. 5901.021. (A) This section applies only to counties having a population, according to the most recent decennial census, of more than five hundred thousand.

(B)(1) In any county that is described in division (A) of this section and in which the veterans service commission submits a budget request under section 5901.11 of the Revised Code for the ensuing fiscal year that exceeds twenty-five-thousandths of one per cent of the assessed value of property in the county or the amount appropriated to the commission from the county general fund in the current fiscal year by more than ten per cent of that appropriation, the board of county commissioners, by resolution, may create not more than six memberships on the veterans service commission in addition to the memberships provided for by section 5901.02 of the Revised Code. The board shall prescribe the number of years the additional memberships shall exist, which shall not exceed five years. Once a board of county commissioners creates any additional memberships, it may not create further additional memberships under this section if the total number of such memberships would exceed six. The board shall appoint persons who are residents of the county and who are honorably discharged or honorably separated veterans to each of the additional memberships, for terms prescribed by the board and commencing on a date fixed by the board. Each person appointed to an additional membership shall file, within sixty days after the date of the appointment, the person's form DD214 with the ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services in accordance with guidelines established by the director of that ~~office~~ department.

(2) If the board of county commissioners appoints additional members as described in division (B)(1) of this section, the board may permit the

commission to submit an original or revised budget request for the ensuing fiscal year later than the last Monday in May, as otherwise required under section 5901.11 of the Revised Code.

(C) The board of county commissioners may remove, for cause, any member appointed under this section. The board shall determine whether the additional members may be reappointed upon the expiration of their terms, and shall fill any vacancy in an additional membership for the unexpired term in the manner provided for the original appointment.

Sec. 5901.07. The veterans service commission shall employ one or more county veterans service officers, one of whom may act as executive director. Each service officer shall be a veteran. Within sixty days after the date of initial employment, each service officer shall file a copy of the officer's form DD214 with the ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs services~~ in accordance with guidelines established by the director of that ~~office~~ department. Each service officer shall be employed in the classified service and is exempt from civil service examination. The commission may remove a veterans service officer who fails to maintain accreditation or whose certification is revoked by the director of veterans services. The service officers shall advise and assist present and former members of the armed forces of the United States, veterans, and their spouses, surviving spouses, children, parents, and dependents in presenting claims or obtaining rights or benefits under any law of the United States or of this state.

The commission shall employ each service officer on a part- or full-time basis and fix the officer's compensation. No county commissioner or member of the veterans service commission shall be employed as a service officer.

The commission shall employ the necessary clerks, stenographers, and other personnel to assist the service officers in the performance of duties and shall fix their compensation. Each of these employees shall be a veteran or, if a qualified veteran is not available, the spouse, surviving spouse, child, or parent of a veteran. Each of these employees shall be employed in the classified service and is exempt from civil service examination.

The board of county commissioners, upon the recommendation or approval of the veterans service commission, may provide suitable office space, supplies, and office and incidental expenses for each service officer. The compensation of each service officer and of any employee and any expenses incurred under this section shall be paid out of funds appropriated to the commission, as provided in section 5901.11 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5901.09. (A) Each applicant for financial assistance under sections

5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code shall provide the veterans service commission with a statement concerning the applicant's household income and the amount of real and personal taxable property, stocks, bonds, moneys on hand loaned or deposited in any bank or elsewhere, shares in building associations, mortgages, notes, or other articles of value from which the applicant derives an income or revenue. The statement shall be made upon blanks furnished by the commission and shall be subscribed by the applicant.

Statements provided under this division shall not include medical records and, pursuant to division (B) of this section, are not public records under section 149.43 of the Revised Code. Veterans service commissions may compile statistical data from the statements in a manner to be prescribed by the ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services. These data shall be considered a matter of public record.

(B) The following are not public records under section 149.43 of the Revised Code:

- (1) A statement described in division (A) of this section;
- (2) Any application for financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code;
- (3) Any documents that accompany and pertain to a statement described in division (A) of this section or an application described in division (B)(2) of this section;
- (4) Any other documents that are used by or are in the possession of a veterans service commission that may affect the determination of the eligibility of an applicant for financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code or that may affect the determination of an increase, decrease, or discontinuance of an allowance under section 5901.14 of the Revised Code, if those documents are required to be kept confidential under any statute of this state or the United States;
- (5) Any applications to obtain benefits under any law of the United States or of this state, and any documents accompanying those applications, in the possession of a veterans service commission and filed by persons in the armed forces of the United States, veterans, or the spouses, surviving spouses, children, parents, or dependents of veterans.

(C) Interviews of applicants for financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code, discussions of the applications, statements, and other documents described in division (B) of this section, and reviews of matters relating to applicants' requests for financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code shall be kept confidential. In accordance with division (J) of section 121.22 of the

Revised Code, a veterans service commission shall conduct a meeting of the commission or a portion of a meeting of the commission to interview an applicant for financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code, to discuss an application, statement, or other document described in division (B) of this section, or to review matters relating to an applicant's request for financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code in an executive session.

(D) Except as otherwise provided in division (E) of this section or division (B) of section 5902.04 of the Revised Code, a veterans service commission shall ensure that the applications, statements, and other documents described in division (B) of this section are not used for any purpose other than to determine the eligibility of the applicant for financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code or to determine whether to increase, decrease, or discontinue an allowance under section 5901.14 of the Revised Code.

(E)(1) An applicant for, or a recipient or former recipient of, financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code may consent to the release by a veterans service commission of any information in an application, statement, or other document described in division (B) of this section that pertains to the applicant, recipient, or former recipient by completing and signing a release of information form. The form shall be prescribed by the ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services. An applicant for, or a recipient or former recipient of, financial assistance shall sign a separate release of information form each time the applicant, recipient, or former recipient consents to the release of any specific information in the application, statement, or other document involved. A copy of each signed release of information form shall be kept in the file of the applicant, recipient, or former recipient kept by the commission. The release of information form shall specify the following items:

- (a) The individual, agency, or organization requesting the information;
- (b) The specific information requested;
- (c) The intended use of the information requested;
- (d) The date of the request for the information;
- (e) The signature of the person who consents to the release of the information.

(2) A law enforcement officer may obtain an application, statement, or document as described in division (B) of this section pursuant to an investigation by a law enforcement authority, upon the issuance of a court order established upon reasonable grounds that the information contained in the ~~applicant~~ application, statement, or document is relevant to a suspected

violation of law.

(3)(a) A party to a matter pending before a court may obtain an application, statement, or document as described in division (B) of this section, if upon application to a court of competent jurisdiction, the party proves all of the following:

(i) The information contained in the application, statement, or document is relevant and material to the matter before the court.

(ii) Disclosure of the application, statement, or document serves the interests of justice, because the need of the party requesting the information within the application, statement, or document outweighs the privacy interest of the applicant, recipient, or former recipient of financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code.

(iii) No other reasonable mean exists to obtain the information contained in the application, statement, or document.

(b) If the party to a matter pending before a court proves all of the elements in division (E)(3)(a) of this section, the court may order the disclosure of an application, statement, or document described in division (B) of this section. For purposes of this division the court shall do all of the following:

(i) Indicate the specific application, statement, or document to be disclosed;

(ii) Indicate the purpose for the disclosure of the application, statement, or ~~document~~ document;

(iii) Indicate the person to whom the application, statement, or document will be disclosed.

Sec. 5902.01. ~~There is hereby established within the office of the governor the governor's office of veterans affairs. The governor shall appoint, with the advice and consent of the senate, a chief executive assistant, who~~ The person appointed to the position of director of veterans services shall be an honorably discharged or honorably separated veteran of the United States armed forces, ~~to be known as director of the governor's office of veterans affairs.~~ The governor's office department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services shall employ ~~such other~~ administrative and technical personnel as are necessary to perform the general and specific duties of the ~~office~~ department. ~~The administrative assistants and technical personnel shall be honorably discharged or honorably separated veterans of the United States armed forces, and shall be employed in the classified service and not be considered employees of the governor's office for purposes of division (A)(16) of section 124.11 or division (B)(2) of section 124.14 of the Revised Code. Each individual employed in the clerical staff shall be an honorably~~

~~discharged or honorably separated veteran or, if a qualified veteran is not available, the spouse, surviving spouse, child, or parent of an honorably discharged or honorably separated veteran, and shall be employed in the classified service and not be considered an employee of the governor's office for purposes of division (A)(16) of section 124.11 of the Revised Code. For positions within the department, the director shall adopt rules under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code establishing a program, which the director shall implement, giving hiring preferences to veterans.~~

Sec. 5902.02. The duties of the director of ~~the governor's office of~~ veterans ~~affairs~~ services shall include the following:

(A) Furnishing the veterans service commissions of all counties of the state copies of the state laws, rules, and legislation relating to the operation of the commissions and their offices;

(B) Upon application, assisting the general public in obtaining records of vital statistics pertaining to veterans or their dependents;

(C) Adopting rules pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code pertaining to minimum qualifications for hiring, certifying, and accrediting county veterans service officers ~~and~~, pertaining to their required duties, and pertaining to revocation of the certification of county veterans service officers;

(D) Adopting rules pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code for the education, training, certification, and duties of veterans service commissioners and for the revocation of the certification of a veterans service commissioner;

(E) Developing and monitoring programs and agreements enhancing employment and training for veterans in single or multiple county areas;

(F) Developing and monitoring programs and agreements to enable county veterans service commissions to address homelessness, indigency, and other veteran-related issues individually or jointly;

(G) Developing and monitoring programs and agreements to enable state agencies, individually or jointly, that provide services to veterans, including the veterans' homes operated under Chapter 5907. of the Revised Code and the director of job and family services, to address homelessness, indigency, employment, and other veteran-related issues;

(H) Establishing and providing statistical reporting formats and procedures for county veterans service commissions;

(I) Publishing annually, promulgating change notices for, and distributing a listing of county veterans service officers, county veterans service commissioners, state directors of veterans affairs, and national and state service officers of accredited veterans organizations and their state

headquarters. The listing shall include the expiration dates of commission members' terms of office and the organizations they represent; the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of county veterans service officers and state directors of veterans affairs; and the addresses and telephone numbers of the Ohio offices and headquarters of state and national veterans service organizations.

(J) Publishing, by the first day of April of each odd-numbered year, a directory of the laws of this state dealing with veterans, as enacted through the conclusion of the previous session of the general assembly, and distributing the publication to each county veterans service office and the state headquarters of each congressionally chartered veterans organization in the state;

(K) Establishing a veterans advisory committee to advise and assist the ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services in its duties. Members shall include a state representative of congressionally chartered veterans organizations referred to in section 5901.02 of the Revised Code, a representative of any other congressionally chartered state veterans organization that has at least one veterans service commissioner in the state, three representatives of the Ohio state association of county veterans service commissioners, who shall have a combined vote of one, three representatives of the state association of county veterans service officers, who shall have a combined vote of one, one representative of the county commissioners association of Ohio, who shall be a county commissioner not from the same county as any of the other county representatives, a representative of the advisory committee on women veterans, a representative of a labor organization, and a representative of the office of the attorney general. The ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services shall submit to the advisory committee proposed rules for the committee's operation. The committee may review and revise these proposed rules prior to submitting them to the joint committee on agency rule review.

(L) Adopting, with the advice and assistance of the veterans advisory committee, policy and procedural guidelines that the veterans service commissions shall adhere to in the development and implementation of rules, policies, procedures, and guidelines for the administration of Chapter 5901. of the Revised Code. The ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services shall adopt no guidelines or rules regulating the purposes, scope, duration, or amounts of financial assistance provided to applicants pursuant to sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code. The director of ~~the governor's office~~ of veterans ~~affairs~~ services may obtain opinions

from the office of the attorney general regarding rules, policies, procedures, and guidelines of the veterans service commissions and may enforce compliance with Chapter 5901. of the Revised Code.

(M) Receiving copies of form DD214 filed in accordance with the director's guidelines adopted under division (L) of this section from members of veterans service commissions appointed under section 5901.02 and from county veterans service officers employed under section 5901.07 of the Revised Code;

(N) Developing and maintaining and improving a resource, such as a telephone answering point or a web site, by means of which veterans and their dependents, through a single portal, can access multiple sources of information and interaction with regard to the rights of, and the benefits available to, veterans and their dependents. The director of veterans services may enter into agreements with state and federal agencies, with agencies of political subdivisions, with state and local instrumentalities, and with private entities as necessary to make the resource as complete as is possible.

(O) Planning, organizing, advertising, and conducting outreach efforts, such as conferences and fairs, at which veterans and their dependents may meet, learn about the organization and operation of the department of veterans services and of veterans service commissions, and obtain information about the rights of, and the benefits and services available to, veterans and their dependents;

(P) Advertising, in print, on radio and television, and otherwise, the rights of, and the benefits and services available to, veterans and their dependents;

(Q) Developing and advocating improved benefits and services for, and improved delivery of benefits and services to, veterans and their dependents;

(R) Searching for, identifying, and reviewing statutory and administrative policies that relate to veterans and their dependents and reporting to the general assembly statutory and administrative policies that should be consolidated in whole or in part within the organization of the department of veterans services to unify funding, delivery, and accounting of statutory and administrative policy expressions that relate particularly to veterans and their dependents;

(S) Encouraging veterans service commissions to innovate and otherwise to improve efficiency in delivering benefits and services to veterans and their dependents and to report successful innovations and efficiencies to the director of veterans services;

(T) Publishing and encouraging adoption of successful innovations and efficiencies veterans service commissions have achieved in delivering

benefits and services to veterans and their dependents:

(U) Establishing advisory committees, in addition to the veterans advisory committee established under division (K) of this section, on veterans issues;

(V) Developing and maintaining a relationship with the United States department of veterans affairs, seeking optimal federal benefits and services for Ohio veterans and their dependents, and encouraging veterans service commissions to maximize the federal benefits and services to which veterans and their dependents are entitled;

(W) Developing and maintaining relationships with the several veterans organizations, encouraging the organizations in their efforts at assisting veterans and their dependents, and advocating for adequate state subsidization of the organizations;

(X) Requiring the several veterans organizations that receive funding from the state annually to report to the director of veterans services and prescribing the form and content of the report;

(Y) Investigating complaints against county veterans services commissioners and county veterans service officers if the director reasonably believes the investigation to be appropriate and necessary;

(Z) Taking any other actions required by this chapter.

Sec. 5902.03. The director of ~~the governor's office of~~ veterans ~~affairs~~ services may microfilm or otherwise duplicate all or any part of copies of original certificates of discharge and separation submitted by Ohio veterans ~~in conjunction with their applications for Ohio war bonuses.~~

The director may prepare and maintain files of such microfilmed certificates of discharge and separation in such manner that they may readily be available for the use of the ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services, authorized veterans service officers of the several congressionally chartered veterans organizations, and county veterans service officers of the several counties of the state in support of applications for compensation, pension, medical, or domiciliary care, or other state and federal benefits provided for eligible veterans or their dependents or survivors.

The director may make copies of such microfilmed certificates of discharge and separation for storage under secure conditions to assure their preservation, and for supply to qualified veterans or their dependents or survivors or to interested and authorized veterans organizations to aid such organizations in their programs of veterans aid and assistance.

Sec. 5902.04. (A) Upon application, the director of ~~the governor's office of~~ veterans ~~affairs~~ services shall furnish necessary instructions and advice to

the veterans of the state, their heirs, or their legal representatives, respecting their claims against the United States or the state for pensions, bounty, bonus, back pay, or otherwise, by reason of military service, ~~and perform other duties that the governor requires.~~

(B) The director or the director's representative may examine the files of any veterans service commission that pertain to either of the following classes of persons to determine the custody, use, or confidentiality of any documents in those files:

(1) Applicants for, or recipients or former recipients of, financial assistance under sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code;

(2) Applicants for federal, state, or county benefits under those sections.

(C)(1) No information or documents obtained by examinations conducted under division (B) of this section shall be considered part of the public records of the ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs services~~. The director may disclose information or documents that the director obtains pursuant to an examination conducted under division (B) of this section and that personally identify an applicant, recipient, or former recipient described in that division, if either of the following applies:

(a) The director considers the disclosure necessary to enforce compliance with Chapter 5901. of the Revised Code.

(b) For the purposes and under the circumstances authorized under division (E) of section 5901.09 of the Revised Code.

(2) In all other cases, the director shall maintain the confidentiality of information or documents that the director obtains pursuant to an examination under division (B) of this section and that personally identify an applicant, recipient, or former recipient described in that division.

Sec. 5902.06. The director of ~~the governor's office~~ of veterans ~~affairs services~~ shall keep a register showing the situation and disposition of any claim filed by ~~that office~~ the department of veterans services.

Sec. 5902.07. The director of ~~the governor's office~~ of veterans ~~affairs services~~ may administer oaths. ~~He shall have a seal of office and his~~ The director's official certificate shall be received in evidence without further authentication.

Sec. 5902.08. The director of ~~the governor's office~~ of veterans ~~affairs services~~, or any employee thereof, shall not receive directly or indirectly a fee or reward of any kind from a claimant or other person for services rendered or to be rendered, relating to a duty required of ~~him~~ the director or employee under sections 5902.01 to 5902.07 of the Revised Code, or in any manner connected therewith.

Sec. 5902.09. The person in charge of a state agency or instrumentality,

an agency or instrumentality of a political subdivision, or a private entity, such as a nursing home, that provides law enforcement, health, or welfare services to individuals, other than the Ohio veterans' home and veterans service organizations, shall ask an individual with whom the agency, instrumentality, or entity interacts if the individual is a veteran or is or was the dependent of a veteran. If the individual claims to be such an individual, the person in charge shall report the individual's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address; the agency's, instrumentality's, or entity's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address; the nature of the agency's, instrumentality's, or entity's interaction with the individual; and the date on which the interaction occurred to the director of veterans services. The director shall inform the veterans service commission having jurisdiction about the veteran or dependent and the interaction. The commission shall inquire about, and offer benefits and services appropriate to, the veteran or dependent.

Sec. 5902.15. (A) If the president of the United States indicates that national guard or reserve forces with headquarters in this state may be called to active military duty, the governor or the director of ~~the governor's office of veterans affairs services~~ shall convene, not later than ten days after all its members are appointed, a military activation task force to determine whether federal, state, and county agencies have prepared proper support mechanisms for that military activation. The task force shall prepare and publish a report stating whether these mechanisms have been prepared and what further actions need to be taken to support that military activation.

(B) The members of the task force are the chairpersons and ranking minority members of the committees of the house of representatives and senate that customarily consider bills dealing with the military and veterans affairs, and a representative of each of the following agencies and organizations whom that agency or organization shall appoint:

- (1) The Ohio army national guard;
- (2) The Ohio air national guard;
- (3) The United States army reserve;
- (4) The United States marine corps reserve;
- (5) The United States naval reserve;
- (6) The United States air force reserve;
- (7) The United States coast guard reserve;
- (8) The United States department of veterans affairs;
- (9) The American Legion, department of Ohio;
- (10) The Veterans of Foreign Wars, department of Ohio;
- (11) The AMVETS, department of ~~Ohio~~ Ohio;

- (12) The Disabled American Veterans, department of ~~Ohio~~ Ohio;
- (13) The American Ex-Prisoners of War, department of Ohio;
- (14) The Vietnam Veterans of America, department of ~~Ohio~~ Ohio;
- (15) The office of the Ohio attorney general;
- (16) The Ohio association of county veterans service officers;
- (17) The Ohio association of county veterans service commissioners;
- (18) ~~The bureau of employment services;~~
- ~~(19)~~ The department of administrative services;
- ~~(20)~~(19) The state department of human job and family services;
- ~~(21)~~(20) The Ohio office of the United States department of labor;
- ~~(22)~~(21) The employer support of the national guard and reserve;
- ~~(23)~~(22) The Ohio military family support group;
- ~~(24)~~(23) The national league of families of prisoners and missing in action;

~~(25)~~(24) The ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services.

(C) At its first meeting, the task force shall elect a chairperson and other officers it considers necessary.

(D) Members of the task force shall receive no compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses they incur in the performance of their duties.

(E) Members of the task force shall serve until the task force publishes its report. Any vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(F) The ~~governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs~~ services shall provide the task force with necessary personnel, supplies, and services.

Sec. 5903.02. (A) ~~The determination of reinstatement and reemployment rights of permanent public employees and permanent private employees in the uniformed services shall be made in accordance with~~ As used in this section, "uniformed services" and "service in the uniformed services" have the same meanings as in the "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994," 108 Stat. 3149, 38 U.S.C.A. 4301, et. seq 4303.

(B) Any person whose absence from a position of employment is necessitated by reason of service in the uniformed services or in the Ohio organized militia has the same reinstatement and reemployment rights in this state that a person has under the "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994." A person who is denied a reinstatement or reemployment right pursuant to this section has a cause of action for the same remedies as a person has under the "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994." The court of common pleas, notwithstanding any sum limitation established by decision of a board of

county commissioners pursuant to section 2305.01 of the Revised Code, shall have exclusive original jurisdiction for such actions, unless the defendant is the state, in which case the court of claims shall have exclusive original jurisdiction pursuant to division (C) of this section.

(C) A person who seeks reinstatement or reemployment rights with the state, pursuant to this section, may bring an action in the court of claims pursuant to this section or section 4323 of the "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994."

(D) In any action or proceeding to enforce a provision of this section, the court shall require the defendant to pay the court costs if the plaintiff is the prevailing party in the action or proceeding. If the plaintiff is not the prevailing party, the court may use its discretion in allocating court costs among the parties to the action.

(E) In any action or proceeding to enforce a provision of this section the court may award to a plaintiff who prevails in such action or proceeding reasonable attorney's fees, expert witness fees, and other litigation expenses. If the plaintiff does not receive a favorable judgment from the court in that action, the court shall not require the plaintiff to reimburse the state or the defendant for attorney's fees.

(F) The director of administrative services shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code for the implementation of this chapter with respect to persons in public service.

Sec. 5903.99. Whoever violates ~~sections 5903.01 and~~ section 5903.02 of the Revised Code may be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

Sec. 5904.01. (A) There is hereby created the Ohio veterans hall of fame. ~~The governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs services~~ shall serve as the veterans hall of fame's administrative agent. The veterans hall of fame shall recognize the post-military achievements of outstanding veterans and spotlight all veterans' contributions to the civilian workplace.

(B) The Ohio veterans hall of fame shall have an executive committee composed of thirteen members, all of whom shall be veterans. The director of ~~the governor's office~~ of veterans ~~affairs services~~ shall be an ex officio member. ~~The governor's office~~ department of veterans ~~affairs' services'~~ veterans advisory committee, the advisory committee on women veterans, the Ohio veterans hall of fame foundation, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the AMVETS, the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the American Legion shall each appoint one member.

The Ohio veterans hall of fame executive committee shall appoint its final four members, one of whom shall be from any veterans organization

that is incorporated in this state and that is not otherwise represented on the executive committee, one of whom was inducted into the veterans hall of fame three years before the current fiscal year, one of whom was inducted into the veterans hall of fame two years before the current fiscal year, and one of whom was inducted into the veterans hall of fame one year before the current fiscal year.

(C) Terms of office of the members of the Ohio veterans hall of fame executive committee shall be for three years. Each member shall serve subsequent to the expiration of the member's term until the member's successor is appointed, or until sixty days has elapsed, whichever occurs first. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

(D) All vacancies in the membership of the Ohio veterans hall of fame executive committee shall be filled in the same manner as prescribed for original appointments, and the terms of the appointees shall be limited to the unexpired terms.

(E) The members of the Ohio veterans hall of fame executive committee shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

(F) The Ohio veterans hall of fame executive committee shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson from its membership. It shall meet annually to select inductees for the veterans hall of fame from the persons nominated in a manner prescribed by the executive committee. The names of selected inductees shall be submitted to the governor for final approval. The governor shall provide any final approval within thirty days after the executive committee submits the names of the selected inductees. The governor may reject any of the selected inductees for cause, but shall not make any additions to the list of those inductees.

(G) Except as otherwise provided in this division, all state elected officials, members of the general assembly, members of the Ohio veterans hall of fame foundation, members of the veterans hall of fame executive committee, members of the governor's staff, members of the veterans hall of fame staff, and members of any county veterans service commission, and the director of ~~the governor's office of veterans affairs services~~, shall not be eligible for induction into the veterans hall of fame until two years after they have left their position. The executive committee may waive the two-years requirement for nominees over the age of seventy.

(H) The Ohio veterans hall of fame executive committee is not subject to sections 101.82 to 101.87 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5907.01. (A) As used in this chapter:

(1) "Nursing home" means a nursing home within a veterans' home.

(2) "Veterans' home" means a veterans' home operated by the Ohio veterans' home agency.

(B) There is hereby established the Ohio veterans' home agency ~~that as part of the department of veterans services.~~ The agency shall maintain and operate veterans' and nursing homes for honorably discharged veterans.

~~Sec. 5907.02. The board of trustees of the Ohio veterans' home agency, which is hereby created, shall consist of seven members who~~ director of veterans services shall govern the Ohio veterans' home agency and have charge and custody of the agency's facilities. The members shall be the director of administrative services or that director's designee, the director of aging or that director's designee, and five members who shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. All the members of the board appointed by the governor shall be veterans of wars in which the United States has participated, and not more than three of the members shall be of the same political party. The trustees shall serve without compensation, but they shall be allowed their actual expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties. Each year, the governor shall appoint one trustee. The term of office for each member of the board shall be for five years, commencing on the first day of July and ending on the thirtieth day of June. Each member shall hold office from the date of that member's appointment until the end of the term for which the member was appointed. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which that member's predecessor was appointed shall hold office for the remainder of that term. Any member shall continue in office subsequent to the expiration date of that member's term until the member's successor takes office, or until a period of sixty days has elapsed, whichever occurs first. The board director shall govern, conduct, and care for veterans' homes, the property of the homes, and the veterans residing in the home.

~~Four members of the board constitute a quorum, but any three may approve the payment of current expenses, salaries, and open contracts previously entered into by the board.~~

All supplies for the agency shall be purchased as provided in sections 125.04 to 125.15 of the Revised Code.

The ~~board~~ director shall appoint a superintendent of the Ohio veterans' home agency upon any terms that are proper, and the superintendent, with the advice and consent of the ~~board~~ director, shall employ aides, assistants, and employees, and perform other duties that may be assigned to the superintendent by the ~~board~~ director or become necessary in the carrying out of the superintendent's duties. The superintendent shall be responsible directly to the ~~board~~ director.

Subject to section 5907.021 of the Revised Code, the superintendent may appoint one or more employees at each veterans' home as veterans' home police officers authorized to act on the grounds of that home. The superintendent shall provide to those employees a copy of the rules that apply to their appointment. The rules shall specify whether or not the police officers may carry a firearm.

Subject to section 5907.021 of the Revised Code, the superintendent shall appoint a chief of police of the Ohio veterans' home agency, determine the number of officers and other personnel required by each veterans' home, and establish salary schedules and other conditions of employment for veterans' homes police officers. The chief of police shall serve at the pleasure of the superintendent and shall appoint officers and other personnel as the veterans' homes may require, subject to the rules and limits that the superintendent establishes regarding qualifications, salary ranges, and the number of personnel. The superintendent, with the approval of the ~~board~~ director, may purchase or otherwise acquire any police apparatus, equipment, or materials, including a police communication system and vehicles, that the veterans' homes police officers may require. The superintendent may send one or more of the officers or employees nominated by the police chief to a school of instruction designed to provide additional training or skills related to their work assignment at their veterans' home. The superintendent may send those officers or employees to the Ohio peace officer training academy that the superintendent considers appropriate.

The ~~board~~ director shall make an annual report to the governor as to all expenditures and as to the management of the Ohio veterans' home agency.

Sec. 5907.022. The ~~board of trustees of the Ohio veterans' home agency~~ director of veterans services may do either of the following to expand nursing home care and domiciliary services to veterans at sites other than the Ohio veterans' homes and nursing homes:

(A) Enter into contracts or agreements, including agreements for the acceptance of grants, to construct, lease, purchase, or otherwise acquire real property or facilities to establish a network of facilities;

(B) Enter into contracts with private providers.

Sec. 5907.023. ~~Neither the~~ The Ohio veterans' home agency established by section 5907.01 of the Revised Code ~~nor the board of trustees of the Ohio veterans' home agency created by section 5907.02 of the Revised Code~~ is not subject to sections 101.82 to 101.87 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5907.03. The management and control of veterans' homes shall be subject to such inspection and supervision as the congress of the United

States may require as a condition of making appropriations for their maintenance. A person appointed or designated by congress may make such inspection and exercise such supervision, and, if so required by congress, the person may have and exercise the privileges of ~~a member of the board of trustees of the Ohio veterans' home agency~~ the director of veterans services.

Sec. 5907.04. ~~All~~ Subject to the following paragraph, all members of the armed forces, who served in the regular or volunteer forces of the United States or the Ohio national guard or members of the naval militia during the war with Spain, the Philippine insurrection, the China relief expedition, the Indian war, the Mexican expedition, World War I, World War II, or during the period beginning June 25, 1950 and ending July 19, 1953, known as the Korean conflict, or during the period beginning August 5, 1964, and ending July 1, 1973, known as the Vietnam conflict, or any person who is awarded either the armed forces expeditionary medal established by presidential executive order 10977 dated December 4, 1961, or the Vietnam service medal established by presidential executive order 11231 dated July 8, 1965, who have been honorably discharged or separated under honorable conditions therefrom, or any discharged members of the Polish and Czechoslovakian armed forces who served in armed conflict with an enemy of the United States in World War I or World War II who have been citizens of the United States for at least ten years, provided that the above-mentioned persons have been citizens of this state for five consecutive years or more at the date of making application for admission, are disabled by disease, wounds, or otherwise, and are by reason of such disability incapable of earning their living, and all members of the Ohio national guard or naval militia who have lost an arm or leg, or their sight, or become permanently disabled from any cause, while in the line and discharge of duty, and are not able to support themselves, may be admitted to a veterans' home under such rules as the ~~board of trustees of the Ohio veterans' home agency~~ director of veterans services adopts.

A person who served in the armed forces of the United States as defined in division (E)(7) of section 5903.11 of the Revised Code is eligible for admission to a veterans' home under the preceding paragraph only if the person has the characteristics defined in division (B)(1) of section 5901.01 of the Revised Code.

The superintendent of the Ohio veterans' home agency shall promptly and diligently pursue the establishment of the eligibility for medical assistance under Chapter 5111. of the Revised Code of all persons admitted to a veterans' home and all residents of a home who appear to qualify and shall promptly and diligently pursue and maintain the certification of each

home's compliance with federal laws and regulations governing participation in the medical assistance program to include as large as possible a part of the home's bed capacity.

Veterans' homes may reserve a bed during the temporary absence of a resident or patient from the home, including a nursing home within it, under conditions prescribed by the ~~board of trustees~~ director, to include hospitalization for an acute condition, visits with relatives and friends, and participation in therapeutic programs outside the home. A home shall not reserve a bed for more than thirty days, except that absences for more than thirty days due to hospitalization may be authorized.

Sec. 5907.11. (A) The superintendent of the Ohio veterans' home agency, with the approval of the ~~board of trustees of the agency~~ director of veterans services, may establish a local fund for each veterans' home to be used for the entertainment and welfare of the residents of the home. Each fund shall be designated as the residents' benefit fund and shall be operated for the exclusive benefit of the residents of the associated home. Each fund shall receive all revenue from the sale of commissary items at the associated home and shall receive all moneys received as donations by the associated home from any source.

(B) The residents' benefit funds also may be used to receive and disburse any donations made for events sponsored by the Ohio veterans hall of fame.

(C) The superintendent, subject to the approval of the ~~board of trustees~~ director, shall establish rules for the operation of the residents' benefit funds.

Sec. 5907.12. The ~~board of trustees of the Ohio veterans' home agency~~ director of veterans services may utilize the services of volunteers to assist in attending to and caring for residents, assisting in resident activities, caring for veterans' homes' buildings and grounds, and participating in any other services that accomplish any of the ~~board's~~ director's purposes related to veterans' homes. All volunteer programs are subject to the ~~board's~~ director's approval. The ~~board~~ director may recruit, train, and supervise the services of community volunteers or volunteer groups for volunteer programs. The ~~board~~ director may designate volunteers as state employees for the purpose of motor vehicle accident liability insurance under section 9.83 of the Revised Code and for the purpose of indemnification from liability incurred in the performance of their duties under section 9.87 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5907.13. Residents of veterans' homes may be assessed a fee to pay a portion of the expenses of their support, dependent upon their ability to pay. Subject to controlling board approval, the ~~board of trustees of the Ohio veterans' home agency~~ director of veterans services shall adopt rules for

determining a resident's ability to pay. Each resident shall furnish the ~~board of trustees~~ director statements of income, assets, debts, and expenses that the ~~board~~ director requires.

All fees contributed by the residents under this section shall be deposited into an interest-bearing account in a public depository in accordance with section 135.18 of the Revised Code. All of these fees shall be paid to the treasurer of state within thirty days after the end of the month of receipt, together with all interest credited to the account to date. The treasurer of state shall credit eighty per cent of these fees and of this interest to the Ohio veterans' homes operating fund and twenty per cent of these fees and of this interest to the Ohio veterans' homes fund.

The fee for each resident shall be based upon the level of care provided to the resident by the resident's home. The ~~board of trustees~~ director shall determine authorized levels of care for residents. The assessment for each resident shall not exceed the difference between the total per diem amount collected by the state for maintenance from all sources on the resident's behalf and the average annual per diem cost for the resident's maintenance, computed in accordance with veterans administration regulations.

Sec. 5907.141. (A) All money received from the United States department of veterans affairs in per diem grants for care that veterans' homes provide shall be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the Ohio veterans' homes federal grant fund, which is hereby created. Money credited to the fund shall be used only for the operating costs of veterans' homes.

(B) Any resident of a veterans' home whom the United States department of veterans affairs determines to have excess income or assets, or is denied per diem for any reason by the United States department of veterans affairs, therefore rendering the home ineligible to collect per diem grant reimbursement for days of care provided to that resident, may be required to pay, in addition to the fees assessed under section 5907.13 of the Revised Code, an amount equal to the rate of per diem grant that the department denied for that particular resident. Any amount that the resident pays under this division shall be collected and distributed in the same manner as the fees assessed under section 5907.13 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5910.02. There is hereby created an Ohio war orphans scholarship board ~~consisting as part of the department of veterans services~~. The board consists of seven ~~eight~~ members as follows: the chancellor of the Ohio board of regents or the chancellor's designee; the director of veterans services or the director's designee; one member of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker; one member of the senate,

appointed by the president of the senate; and four members appointed by the governor, one of whom shall be a representative of the American Legion, one of whom shall be a representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, one of whom shall be a representative of the Disabled American Veterans, and one of whom shall be a representative of the AMVETS. At least ninety days prior to the expiration of the term of office of the representative of a veterans organization appointed by the governor, the governor shall notify the state headquarters of the affected organization of the need for an appointment and request the organization to make at least three nominations. Within sixty days after making the request for nominations, the governor may make the appointment from the nominations received, or may reject all the nominations and request at least three new nominations, from which the governor shall make an appointment within thirty days after making the request for the new nominations. If the governor receives no nominations during this thirty-day period, the governor may appoint any veteran.

Terms of office for the four members appointed by the governor shall be for four years, commencing on the first day of January and ending on the thirty-first day of December, except that the term of the AMVETS representative shall expire December 31, 1998, and the new term that succeeds it shall commence on January 1, 1999, and end on December 31, 2002. Each member shall hold office from the date of the member's appointment until the end of the term for which the member was appointed. The other members shall serve during their terms of office. Any vacancy shall be filled by appointment in the same manner as by original appointment. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed shall hold office for the remainder of such term. Any appointed member shall continue in office subsequent to the expiration date of the member's term until the member's successor takes office, or until a period of sixty days has elapsed, whichever occurs first. The members of the board shall serve without pay but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses and for other actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, not to exceed ten dollars per day for ten days in any one year to be appropriated out of any moneys in the state treasury to the credit of the general revenue fund.

The chancellor of the board of regents shall act as secretary to the board and shall furnish such clerical and other assistance as may be necessary to the performance of the duties of the board.

The board shall determine the number of scholarships to be made available, receive applications for scholarships, pass upon the eligibility of

applicants, decide which applicants are to receive scholarships, and do all other things necessary for the proper administration of this chapter.

Sec. 5923.05. (A)(1) Permanent public employees who are members of the Ohio organized militia or members of other reserve components of the armed forces of the United States, including the Ohio national guard, are entitled to a leave of absence from their respective positions without loss of pay for the time they are performing service in the uniformed services, for periods of up to one month, for each calendar year in which they are performing service in the uniformed services.

(2) As used in this section:

(a) "Calendar year" means the year beginning on the first day of January and ending on the last day of December.

(b) "Month" means twenty-two eight-hour work days or one hundred seventy-six hours within one calendar year.

(c) ~~"Permanent public employees" and "uniformed services" have the same meanings as in section 5903.01 of the Revised Code~~ employee" means any person holding a position in public employment that requires working a regular schedule of twenty-six consecutive biweekly pay periods, or any other regular schedule of comparable consecutive pay periods, which is not limited to a specific season or duration. "Permanent public employee" does not include student help; intermittent, seasonal, or external interim employees; or individuals covered by personal services contracts.

(d) "State agency" means any department, bureau, board, commission, office, or other organized body established by the constitution or laws of this state for the exercise of any function of state government, the general assembly, all legislative agencies, the supreme court, the court of claims, and the state-supported institutions of higher education.

(e) "Service in the uniformed services" means the performance of duty, on a voluntary or involuntary basis, in a uniformed service, under competent authority, and includes active duty, active duty for training, initial active duty for training, inactive duty for training, full-time national guard duty, and performance of duty or training by a member of the Ohio organized militia pursuant to Chapter 5923. of the Revised Code. "Service in the uniformed services" includes also the period of time for which a person is absent from a position of public or private employment for the purpose of an examination to determine the fitness of the person to perform any duty described in this division.

(f) "Uniformed services" means the armed forces, the Ohio organized militia when engaged in active duty for training, inactive duty training, or full-time national guard duty, the commissioned corps of the public health

service, and any other category of persons designated by the president of the United States in time of war or emergency.

(B) Except as otherwise provided in division (D) of this section, any permanent public employee who is employed by a political subdivision, who is entitled to the leave provided under division (A) of this section, and who is called or ordered to the uniformed services for longer than a month, for each calendar year in which the employee performed service in the uniformed services, because of an executive order issued by the president of the United States, because of an act of congress, or because of an order to perform duty issued by the governor pursuant to section 5919.29 of the Revised Code is entitled, during the period designated in the order or act, to a leave of absence and to be paid, during each monthly pay period of that leave of absence, the lesser of the following:

(1) The difference between the permanent public employee's gross monthly wage or salary as a permanent public employee and the sum of the permanent public employee's gross uniformed pay and allowances received that month;

(2) Five hundred dollars.

(C) Except as otherwise provided in division (D) of this section, any permanent public employee who is employed by a state agency, who is entitled to the leave provided under division (A) of this section, and who is called or ordered to the uniformed services for longer than a month, for each calendar year in which the employee performed service in the uniformed services, because of an executive order issued by the president of the United States, because of an act of congress, or because of an order to perform duty issued by the governor pursuant to section 5919.29 or 5923.21 of the Revised Code is entitled, during the period designated in the order or act, to a leave of absence and to be paid, during each monthly pay period of that leave of absence, the difference between the permanent public employee's gross monthly wage or salary as a permanent public employee and the sum of the permanent public employee's gross uniformed pay and allowances received that month.

(D) No permanent public employee shall receive payments under division (B) or (C) of this section if the sum of the permanent public employee's gross uniformed pay and allowances received in a pay period exceeds the employee's gross wage or salary as a permanent public employee for that period or if the permanent public employee is receiving pay under division (A) of this section.

(E) Any political subdivision of the state, as defined in section 2744.01 of the Revised Code, may elect to pay any of its permanent public

employees who are entitled to the leave provided under division (A) of this section and who are called or ordered to the uniformed services for longer than one month, for each calendar year in which the employee performed service in the uniformed services, because of an executive order issued by the president or an act of congress, such payments, in addition to those payments required by division (B) of this section, as may be authorized by the legislative authority of the political subdivision.

(F) Each permanent public employee who is entitled to leave provided under division (A) of this section shall submit to the permanent public employee's appointing authority the published order authorizing the call or order to the uniformed services or a written statement from the appropriate military commander authorizing that service, prior to being credited with that leave.

(G) Any permanent public employee of a political subdivision whose employment is governed by a collective bargaining agreement with provision for the performance of service in the uniformed services shall abide by the terms of that collective bargaining agreement with respect to the performance of that service, except that no collective bargaining agreement may afford fewer rights and benefits than are conferred under this section.

SECTION 2. That existing sections 121.02, 121.03, 2311.07, 2311.08, 2743.03, 3313.616, 3319.13, 4112.01, 5901.02, 5901.021, 5901.07, 5901.09, 5902.01, 5902.02, 5902.03, 5902.04, 5902.06, 5902.07, 5902.08, 5902.15, 5903.02, 5903.99, 5904.01, 5907.01, 5907.02, 5907.022, 5907.023, 5907.03, 5907.04, 5907.11, 5907.12, 5907.13, 5907.141, 5910.02, and 5923.05 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. That sections 124.29, 5902.05, and 5903.01 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. Chapter 5902. of the Revised Code shall be known as "Department of Veterans Services."

SECTION 5. On the effective date of this section, the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs is abolished and its functions, and its assets and liabilities, are transferred to the Department of Veterans Services. The Department of Veterans Services is successor to, assumes the obligations and authority of,

and otherwise continues the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs. No right, privilege, or remedy, and no duty, liability, or obligation, accrued under the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs is impaired or lost by reason of the transfer and shall be recognized, administered, performed, or enforced by the Department of Veterans Services.

Business commenced but not completed by the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs or by the Director of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs shall be completed by the Department of Veterans Services or the Director of Veterans Services in the same manner, and with the same effect, as if completed by the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs or the Director of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs.

All the rules, orders, and determinations of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs continue in effect as rules, orders, and determinations of the Department of Veterans Services, until modified or rescinded by the Department of Veterans Services. If necessary to ensure the integrity of the numbering of the Administrative Code, the Director of the Legislative Service Commission shall renumber the rules of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs to reflect their transfer to the Department of Veterans Services.

Subject to the layoff provisions of sections 124.321 to 124.382 of the Revised Code, all employees of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs are transferred to the Department of Veterans Services and retain their positions and all benefits accruing thereto.

The Director of Budget and Management shall determine the amount of unexpended balances in the appropriation accounts that pertain to the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs and shall recommend to the Controlling Board their transfer to appropriation accounts that pertain to the Department of Veterans Services. The Director of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs shall provide full and timely information to the Controlling Board to facilitate the transfer.

Whenever the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs or the Director of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs is referred to in a statute, contract, or other instrument, the reference is deemed to refer to the Department of Veterans Services or to the Director of Veterans Services, whichever is appropriate in context.

No pending action or proceeding being prosecuted or defended in court or before an agency by the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs or the Director of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs is affected by the transfer and shall be prosecuted or defended in the name of Department of Veterans Services or the Director of Veterans Services, whichever is

appropriate. Upon application to the court or agency, the Department of Veterans Services or the Director of Veterans Services shall be substituted as a party.

SECTION 6. On the effective date of this section, the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency is abolished and its functions, and its assets and liabilities, are transferred to the Department of Veterans Services. The Department of Veterans Services is successor to, assumes the obligations and authority of, and otherwise continues the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency. No right, privilege, or remedy, and no duty, liability, or obligation, accrued under the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency is impaired or lost by reason of the transfer and shall be recognized, administered, performed, or enforced by the Department of Veterans Services.

Business commenced but not completed by the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency or its Board of Trustees shall be completed by the Department of Veterans Services or the Director of Veterans Services in the same manner, and with the same effect, as if completed by the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency or its Board of Trustees.

All the rules, orders, and determinations of the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency or its Board of Trustees continue in effect as rules, orders, and determinations of the Department of Veterans Services, until modified or rescinded by the Department of Veterans Services. If necessary to ensure the integrity of the numbering of the Administrative Code, the Director of the Legislative Service Commission shall renumber the rules of the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency or its Board of Trustees to reflect their transfer to the Department of Veterans Services.

Subject to the layoff provisions of sections 124.321 to 124.382 of the Revised Code, all employees of the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency are transferred to the Department of Veterans Services and retain their positions and all benefits accruing thereto.

The Director of Budget and Management shall determine the amount of unexpended balances in the appropriation accounts that pertain to the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency and shall recommend to the Controlling Board their transfer to appropriation accounts that pertain to the Department of Veterans Services. The Board of Trustees of the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency shall provide full and timely information to the Controlling Board to facilitate the transfer.

Whenever the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency or its Board of Trustees is referred to in a statute, contract, or other instrument, the reference is deemed to refer to the Department of Veterans Services or to the Director of

Veterans Services, whichever is appropriate in context.

No pending action or proceeding being prosecuted or defended in court or before an agency by the Ohio Veterans' Home Agency or its Board of Trustees is affected by the transfer and shall be prosecuted or defended in the name of the Department of Veterans Services or the Director of Veterans Services, whichever is appropriate. Upon application to the court or agency, the Department of Veterans Services or the Director of Veterans Services shall be substituted as a party.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Passed _____, 20____

Approved _____, 20____

Governor.

Am. Sub. S. B. No. 289

127th G.A.

The section numbering of law of a general and permanent nature is complete and in conformity with the Revised Code.

Director, Legislative Service Commission.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Columbus, Ohio, on the ____ day of _____, A. D. 20____.

Secretary of State.

File No. _____ Effective Date _____