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2020 Veterans Legislative Symposia Report June 1, 2020

1. Purpose: This report presents recommendations gathered from Nevada's Veterans Community for consideration by the Governor and the Nevada State Legislature.

2. Background:

a. The Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) partnered with Nevada's United Veterans Legislative Council (UVLC) to host a virtual Veterans Legislative Symposium on May 26, 2020.

b. The purpose of Nevada's Veterans Legislative Symposia is to bring together representatives from the Nevada veteran's community to develop legislative recommendations for the upcoming legislative session. The results of these symposia are compiled into a report and presented to the Governor and to members of the Nevada Legislature.

c. While the purpose of the Symposia is to identify issues that might be addressed by the State of Nevada Legislature, issues are often raised that can be addressed by the Governor or by State of Nevada Agencies. These issues are referred to the appropriate State authority. Additionally, any Federal issues raised by participants are presented to members of Nevada's Congressional delegation for their review and consideration.

d. For the past three legislative sessions, symposia were held as in-person events in Las Vegas and in Reno. However, due to public gathering restrictions necessitated by COVID-19 infection control measures, the 2020 Veterans Legislative Symposium was conducted as a virtual event.

3. 2020 Veterans Legislative Symposia Outcomes:

a. In advance of the May 26, 2020 Veterans Service Organization Convening (which served as the 2020 Symposia) recommendations were gathered from six Nevada's veterans boards, councils, and commissions, from

State of Nevada Veterans Services Organizations, and from individual veterans and their supporters. During the Convening, final recommendations and prioritizations were gathered and are outlined in this report.

b. 48 recommendations were identified, and 11 of these recommendations were prioritized as being the most critical. Two of the 48 were Federal issues and will be referred to Nevada's Federal Delegation for consideration (Enclosure A).

c. There were several common themes that emerged from the recommendations. These themes, in priority order, were:

THEME 1: Improve outreach and information programs to increase awareness of, and connection to, veterans benefits and services.

THEME 2: Honor and recognize veteran's service by reducing certain state fees, tuition, and taxes.

THEME 3: Support and expand veteran mental and medical health care programs, especially those associated with suicide prevention.

THEME 4: Provide needed support to families and caregivers.

d. Finally, some of the issues raised by participants did not have broad support by participants, but they might be representative of issues or concerns of veterans not present so while they may not be statistically relevant, they are worth reviewing.

4. For additional information, please contact Director Kat Miller at millerk@veterans.nv.gov or Mr. David Johnson at johnsond@veterans.nv.gov.

Encl:

2020 Veterans Legislative Symposium (Virtual), 48 Issues for Consideration by the Governor, the State Legislature, and Federal Representatives (5/28/20)

ENCLOSURE A
2020 Veterans Legislative Symposium (Virtual)
 48 Issues for Consideration by the Governor, State Legislature,
 and Federal Representatives

11 Prioritized List of Issues Considered Most Critical by Nevada's State Veterans Service Organizations	
1	The State of Nevada should continue to pursue activities in support of reducing suicide among Nevada's veterans.
2	The State of Nevada should pursue options to improve support to caregivers of Nevada's veterans.
3	The State of Nevada should fund and modernize the Southern Nevada State Veterans Home
4	The State of Nevada should reduce or eliminate business license fees for veteran owned businesses.
5	The Office of the Attorney General should continue to Implement the Office of Military Legal Assistance Program for Veterans.
6*	The State of Nevada should construct and operate veteran adult day health care facilities.
6*	The State of Nevada should reduce or eliminate Nevada State Park Fees for all veterans.
7	The Nevada Department of Veterans Services should create an outreach officer position in northern Nevada.
8	The State of Nevada should create and support Military Spouse Employment and Reciprocity Programs.
9	The State of Nevada should create a State Transition Assistance Program.
10	The State of Nevada should allow students at universities and colleges not associated with the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to use veteran services at NSHE Schools.

* The issues with an asterisk (*) were tied for sixth place.

35 Items raised by Nevada's State Veterans Organizations as worthy for consideration. In alphabetical order by "Short Title"	
2-1-1:	The State of Nevada should continue funding of the 2-1-1 Nevada information line.
Adopt-a-Vet Dental:	The State of Nevada should continue funding the Adopt-a-Vet Dental care program.
Burial Location System:	The Nevada Department of Veterans Services should continue with plans to create a veterans burial site location system.

<p>Driver's License Code: The State of Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles should add information on the back of the driver's license for Veteran and Disabled status and put a code for VA rating or the percentage on the license from VA ratings letters.</p>
<p>Fund Raising Activities: The State of Nevada should change NRS 462 and GCB Regulation 4A. This regulation severely curtails fund raising activities for many local groups who raise money to support local veteran activities.</p>
<p>Health Care Provider Outreach: State of Nevada agencies and licensing boards should conduct outreach to Health Care Providers to ensure they are aware of medical conditions related to military service, and VA financial compensation that veterans and their families may be eligible for to help cover medical costs.</p>
<p>Incarcerated Veterans Units: The State of Nevada Department of Corrections (DOC) and County sheriffs should create veteran units and support groups in correctional facilities, where possible.</p>
<p>In-State Tuition: The State of Nevada should amend AB76 to remove all in-state tuition time limits for veterans and military family members attending NSHE schools, granting in-state tuition to any veteran or military family member attending any NSHE school.</p>
<p>In-State Tuition—Disabled Veteran: If the State of Nevada does not remove all in-state tuition time limits for all veterans and military family member attending any NSHE school, the three-year time limit for family members of disabled veterans should be removed. Currently, any Chapter 35 VA Education Benefits for military dependents of 100% disabled veterans allows the student to be granted in-state tuition within three years of their sponsor's discharge.</p>
<p>Insurance Concern: The State of Nevada should address the problem with Insurance agencies such as GEICO charging Active, Guard, and Reserve members returning from deployment more money based on the words "Deployment" or "Returning from Deployment."</p>
<p>Isolated and Rural Veteran Support: The State of Nevada should expand programs for Isolated and rural veterans designed to connect them to benefits and services (to include traveling teams with veterans service officers, legal assistance, and other programs geared toward veterans).</p>
<p>Isolated Veteran Support: The State of Nevada should create and expand programs to support isolated veterans, to include homebound, incarcerated, rural, Native American, and veterans in care facilities.</p>
<p>Mental Health PSAs: The State of Nevada should create public service announcement on the needs of veterans, specifically focusing on the resilience of veterans who may have been suffering from mental health issues in the community.</p>

<p>Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Workshops: The State of Nevada should continue funding of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) workshops for health professionals and victims of MST.</p>
<p>NNG/DHHS Data Sharing Agreement: The Nevada National Guard (NNG) and the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) should establish a data sharing agreement to assist DPBH synthesize survey data and analyze suicide ideology among NNG service members.</p>
<p>PH Parking Fees: The State of Nevada should amend NRS 482.377 to exempt all vehicles displaying the Purple Heart license plate, with or without the international symbol of access, from government parking fees.</p>
<p>Veteran K-12 Teacher Credentialing Change: The State of Nevada should not require military retirees who have a bachelor's degree in certain disciplines to obtain an additional 60 credits at the bachelor level to qualify as a teacher in the Nevada K-12 system. This will significantly reduce the teacher shortage statewide, while at the same time attract veterans to teach in Nevada.</p>
<p>Scatter Gardens: The Nevada Department of Veterans Services should create Scatter Gardens at both cemeteries.</p>
<p>Spouse Interment Fees: The State of Nevada should eliminate the fees for spouse interment at State Veterans Memorial Cemeteries.</p>
<p>Tax Exemptions: The State of Nevada should create property tax/vehicle tax exemption categories for all veterans.</p>
<p>Tuition Waiver for Family Members: The State of Nevada, as a reenlistment incentive, should allow current serving National Guard Members to transfer all or part of their State of Nevada individual tuition waiver to a qualifying spouse or dependent.</p>
<p>TV/Digital Marketing: The Nevada Department of Veterans Services should utilize television and other electronic and digital communications can reach a vast potential new audience.</p>
<p>VA Program Awareness: State of Nevada agencies should Increase awareness of the Medical and Mental Health care of Service Members, Veterans, and their Families for Public and Private Providers as provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.</p>
<p>Veteran Outdoors Programming: The State of Nevada should support programs like "Irreverent Warriors" and "Outward Bound for Veterans" that reenergize veterans through adventure and outside wilderness courses.</p>
<p>Veteran Peer Mentor Program: The State of Nevada should provide funding to support the Veteran Peer Mentor Program to include training and travel.</p>
<p>Veteran Program Information: State of Nevada agencies should submit information regarding veterans and servicemembers programs, services, and events to the Nevada Department of Veterans Services to support their</p>

<p>statutory responsibility to Serve as a clearinghouse and disseminate information relating to veterans' benefits.</p>
<p>Veteran Sick Leave: The State of Nevada should create an additional sick leave category for veterans who are new State employees and who have not yet accrued sufficient sick leave time to attend health care appointments associated with military service.</p>
<p>Veterans Information System: State of Nevada State agencies should support veteran personal data input into the Nevada Veterans Information System.</p>
<p>Veterans Preference: The State of Nevada should provide for a veteran priority or a preference for veterans with a medical background who otherwise qualify for attendance at a NSHE nursing or medical program.</p>
<p>Virtual Communications Program: The State of Nevada should start a virtual communications program using IPADs and other devices to allow the veterans at state run veteran homes to video conference their loved ones during visitation restriction.</p>
<p>Water Conservation at Cemeteries: The Nevada Department of Veterans Services should continue to pursue water-wise options at State Veterans Cemeteries.</p>
<p>Week-End Burial Option: The Nevada Department of Veterans Services should consider offering a week-end burial option at Nevada State Veterans Memorial Cemeteries.</p>
<p>Winnemucca Armory: The Nevada National Guard should allow veterans organizations to use the Winnemucca Armory for a meeting place.</p>
<p>Women in Military Service Memorial: The State of Nevada should support efforts to register Nevada's Women Veterans at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.</p>
<p>Women's Military History Month: The State of Nevada should make the recognition of Women's Military History Month a permanent annual recognition.</p>

<p>2 Items raised by Nevada's State Veterans Organizations that will be Referred to Nevada's Federal Delegation. In alphabetical order by "Short Title"</p>
<p>Real ID: Allow the use of DOD retired ID card in lieu of Real ID for travel purposes in the US. ([Federal Issue])</p>
<p>Rural Burial Ground: The State of Nevada should support the creation of a rural Burial Ground in Elko.</p>