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Report to the Veteran Community on the 81st Legislative Session

Fulfilling the Requirements of Assembly Bill 62 (2015)
Provided by the Director of the Nevada Department of Veterans Services

September 1, 2021

1. Introduction: This memorandum provides a report to the veteran community as required by NRS 417.103. This report is intended to provide information regarding veterans' legislation to the veteran community, and, over time, to establish a history of legislation introduced, passed, or considered that can be referenced in future policy discussions. NRS 417.103 requires the Director of the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) to provide this report no later than September 1 following each regular session of the Legislature, and requires that the report provide details on the following:

- A description of each newly enacted statute by the Legislature affecting veterans in this State.
- A description of each bill, or portion of a bill, newly enacted by the Legislature that appropriates or authorizes money for veterans, or otherwise affects the amount of money that is available for veterans' services, including, without limitation, each line item in a budget for such an appropriation or authorization.
- A brief plan by the Director, NDVS for carrying out duties required by newly passed legislation.
- The date on which each statute and bill described in the memorandum becomes effective.

2. Background:

a. For decades, NDVS has coordinated the efforts of Nevada's veterans community events by convening legislative meetings and councils to: (1) gather issues important to veterans that could be considered for a legislative bill draft request (BDR), and (2) educate veterans, their families, and their supporters so they might fully participate in the legislative process. The three events traditionally conducted are the Veterans Legislative Symposium, the Veterans Legislative Summit, and Veterans and Military Day at the Legislature.

b. During the 77th Legislative Session (2013), Nevada's veterans organizations formed an informal coalition (later organized as the United Veterans Legislative Council or UVLC) to help create a single voice, where possible, to advocate for veterans legislation. During the 78th Legislative Session, NDVS first partnered with the UVLC to conduct the Veterans Legislative Symposium, the Veterans Legislative Summit, and Veterans and Military Day at the Legislature.

c. This partnership continued through later Legislative Sessions, resulting in a greater appreciation of issues affecting Nevada veterans, active duty, guard, and reserve serving in Nevada, and their family members. During the 81st Legislative Session the UVLC Chair was Andy LePeilbet (Military

Order of the Purple Heart) and UVLC senior representatives; Secretary and Past Chair Mr. Tony Yarbrough (Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Nevada), Vice Chair Ms. Bobbi Oates, (Women Veterans of Nevada), Mr. Mitch Roach (American Legion Department of Nevada), and Mr. Bruno Moya (Operation Enduring Freedom - Operation Iraqi Freedom).

3. 81st Legislative Session Events

a. Legislative Symposium. Virtual: May 26, 2020

(1) During the past three session, symposia have been held in both Northern and Southern Nevada. Due to the global pandemic, a single symposium was held virtually.

(2) Recommendations gathered from six Nevada's veterans panels, committees, and commission, and from State of Nevada Veterans Services Organizations, were presented to Symposium participants. Participants included leaders of all of Nevada's major Veterans Service Organizations, and from individual veterans and their supporters.

(3) During the Symposium final recommendations and prioritizations were gathered and compiled into a report for consideration by Nevada's elected officials. 48 recommendations were identified, and 11 of these recommendations were prioritized as being the most critical. Two of the 48 were Federal issues and were referred to Nevada's Federal Delegation for consideration.

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

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

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

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

STATE-WIDE THEME 4: Provide needed support to families and caregivers.

b. 81st Legislative Summit. Virtual: January 19, 2021

(1) The purpose of the summits was to provide an update on the status of the prioritized legislative recommendations developed during the Symposium, a description of bills that had been pre-filed with the Legislative Counsel Bureau, and information about how veterans and veteran supporters could participate in the legislative process, even in a session where in-person participation was affected by a pandemic.

(2) Post-session discussions with UVLC and other veterans wishing to observe or participate in session hearings highlighted challenges associated with access to hearings and legislators due to the nature of safety-driven restrictions. As a result, there was limited participation by the UVLC with daily follow-up and involvement for all bills.

c. Veterans and Military Day at the Legislature (VAMDAL). *Carson City Capitol and Legislative Complexes: March 17, 2021*

(1) Veterans Day at the Legislature. The third Wednesday in March during each regular session of the Legislature is established as “Veterans Day at the Legislature” in the State of Nevada in recognition of the contributions veterans have made to the prosperity of Nevada and the United States (NRS 236.047).

(2) Historically, VAMDAL is jointly hosted by NDVS, the UVLC, and the Nevada National Guard and provides an opportunity for veterans to talk directly to legislators on legislation important to them and to see a display of Nevada National Guard equipment. Because of safety requirements resulting from the global pandemic, changes were made to VAMDAL 2021. In lieu of an in-person ceremony and veterans' participation on the floors of the Senate and the Assembly, NDVS prepared a virtual presentation shown in both the Senate and Assembly.

(3) With the assistance of the Senate and Assembly Staff, the Nevada National Guard, and the UVLC, this important day did not go unrecognized. The presentation may be viewed at <https://sg001-harmony.sliq.net/00324/Harmony/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2/20210325/-/1/13222?mediaStartTime=20210317120410&mediaEndTime=20210317121410&viewMode=3&globalStreamId=4>.

4. 81st Legislative Session Bill Overview

a. 24 bill draft requests (BDRs) supporting veterans, military, and their families were assigned a bill. 15 important Veterans bills were signed into law by Governor Sisolak and one Senate Joint Resolution was enrolled and sent to the Secretary of State. Eight bills failed by the Legislative deadline. While the number of bills signed falls short of the 80th Session's 20 bills, there were fewer issues identified that had broad veteran community consensus during the 2020 Veterans Legislative Symposium, partially due to reduced participation resulting from gathering restrictions.

b. Each one of the state-wide themes identified in the 2018 Legislative Symposia were addressed through 15 bills that the Governor signed, or through the passage of Governor Sisolak's SFY 22-23 Budget as shown here. Details of each of the bills shown below are in Paragraph 5 and 6 of this report:

THEME 1: Improve outreach and information programs: AB 22, AB 316

THEME 2: Reduce state fees, tuition, and taxes: AB 28, AB 102, AB, 156, AB 165, AB 202, SB 185, SB 193, SB 440

THEME 3: Support veteran mental and medical health care: AB 76, AB 77, SB 185, SB 390

THEME 4: Provide needed support to families and caregivers. AB 76, AB 156, SB 193, SJR 06, and Governor's CIP Budget to remodel the Southern Nevada State Veterans Home and to expand and improve Southern and Northern Nevada State Veterans Memorial Cemeteries

5. Detailed Description of Legislation Considered and Passed. The following section provides a description of veteran-related legislation that passed, the date each statute and bill described in

the memorandum becomes effective, and a brief plan by the NDVS Director for carrying out duties required by newly passed legislation. Additionally, this section also lists bills that failed by deadline or by the Governor's veto as reference for future policy discussions on veterans' issues.

✓ **AB 22:** Establish a State Transition Assistance Program for veterans and servicemen and servicewomen (BDR 37-283).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs on behalf of NDVS

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, Senate unanimously, 1 excused

Effective Date: May 26, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: The TAP Online program will be launched by 1 November 2021. In-person TAP programs are on hold until COVID-19 positivity rates are below five percent, and they can be safely conducted.

✓ **AB 28:** Imposes an inverse preference on certain bidders for state purchasing contracts, making exceptions to include persons with a principal place of business in a state other than the State of Nevada (BDR 27-238).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs

Votes: Passed Assembly, 40 yea, 2 nay, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: Department of Administration is the lead for this action.

✓ **AB 76:** Authorize NDVS to establish and operate adult day health care facilities (BDR 37-284).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs on behalf of NDVS.

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: May 26, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation:

✓ **AB 77:** Adds veterans suicide prevention and homelessness programs to NDVS statutory duties; standardizes veterans advisory public body terms to 3 years (BDR 37-285).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs on behalf of NDVS.

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: Sections 5 and 6 of this act effective May 26, 2021. Sections 1 to 4, inclusive, of this act effective on July 1, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: NDVS has hired a full-time contracted Suicide Prevention Program Manager and a Homelessness/Justice Re-Integration Program Manager to ensure that these important programs are properly implemented and managed.

✓ **AB 102:** Revises requirements for the issuance of certain annual permits for entering, camping, and boating in state parks and recreational areas (BDR 35-877).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner and Assemblyman Edgar Flores.

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, Senate unanimously, 1 excused

Effective Date: Section 2 effective May 26, 2021. Section 1 of this act effective: (a) May 26, 2021, for the purpose of adopting any regulations and performing any other preparatory administrative tasks that are necessary to carry out the provisions of this act; and (b) On July 1, 2021, for all other purposes

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is the lead for this action.

✓ **AB 121:** Revises the deadlines by which military and overseas voters may submit certain applications to register to vote and cast a ballot (BDR 24-896).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblywoman Lesley Cohen, Senator James Ohrenschall, Senator Pat Spearman, and Senator Roberta Lange.

Votes: Passed Assembly, 32 yea, 10 nay, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: Section 17 effective June 3, 2021. Sections 1 to 16, inclusive, of this act effective: (a) June 3, 2021, for the purpose of adopting regulations and performing any other preliminary administrative tasks that are necessary to carry out the provisions of this act; and (b) On January 1, 2022, for all other purposes.

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: The Secretary of State is the lead for this action.

✓ **AB 156:** Allows members of the Nevada National Guard to transfer NSHE tuition waiver to a spouse or child (BDR 34-23).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblywoman Robin Titus, Assemblyman Tom Roberts, and Assemblyman John Ellison.

Votes: Passed Assembly, 40 yea, 2 nay, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and the Nevada National Guard are the leads for this action.

✓ **AB 165:** Removes 5-year limit on assessing certain tuition charges against honorably discharged veterans (BDR 34-681)

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy, Assemblyman Philip P.K. O'Neill, Assemblyman Jim Wheeler, Assemblyman John Ellison, Assemblyman Tom Roberts, Senator Carrie Buck, and Senator Joseph Hardy.

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: NSHE is the lead for this action.

✓ **AB 202:** Revises provisions relating to charitable lotteries and charitable games (BDR 41-581).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblyman Steve Yeager.

Votes: Passed Assembly, 33 yea, 9 nay, Senate unanimously, 1 excused

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: The Department of Taxation is the lead for this action.

Note: AB 202 met the intent of AB 234, 285, and 293 and no final action was taken on those bills.

✓ **AB 316:** Requires the disclosure of certain information concerning certain events and services relating to benefits or entitlements for veterans; creating a cause of action for certain violations of such requirements; providing a civil penalty; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblyman Philip P.K. O'Neill, Assemblyman Jim Wheeler, Assemblywoman Jill Dickman, Assemblyman Glen Leavitt, and Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy.

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: Section 6 effective May 29, 2021. Sections 1 to 5, inclusive, of this act become effective: (a) May 29, 2021, for the purpose of adopting any regulations and performing any other preparatory administrative tasks that are necessary to carry out the provisions of this act; and (b) On

January 1, 2022, for all other purposes.

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: NDVS will update our website to provide information to veterans, veterans organizations, and businesses regarding this new requirement. Should we be informed of a violation, we will report the violation to the Office of the Attorney General.

✓ **SB 28:** Establishes the offense of sexual harassment within the Nevada Code of Military Justice (BDR 36-261).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Senate Committee on Government Affairs.

Votes: Passed Assembly, 35 yea, 7 nay, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: May 27, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: The Nevada National Guard is the lead for this action.

✓ **SB 185:** Makes an appropriation of \$500,000 to the Department of Veterans Services to provide financial assistance and support for the Adopt a Vet Dental Program (BDR S-381).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Senate Committee on Finance.

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, Senate unanimously, 2 excused

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: NDVS will receive these funds and distribute them to the Adopt a Vet Dental Program in accordance with State fiscal procedures.

✓ **SB 193:** Requires the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada to create a preference in admission to certain programs for veterans; prohibits the assessment of a tuition charge against veterans and their spouses and dependents.

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Senate Committee on Education

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, 1 absent, Senate unanimously, 1 excused

Effective Date: Sections 1 to 4, inclusive, and 6 effective October 1, 2021. Sections 5 and 7 effective July 1, 2021.

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: NSHE is the lead for this action.

✓ **SB 390:** Provides for the establishment of a suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline (BDR 39-635).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services.

Votes: Passed Assembly, 35 yea, 7 nay, Senate, 19 yea, 2 nay

Effective Date: Sections 1 to 6, inclusive, effective June 4, 2021, for the purpose of adopting any regulations and performing any other preparatory administrative tasks that are necessary to carry out the provisions of this act; and on January 1, 2022, for all other purposes. Sections 7 to 13, inclusive, and 14 effective June 4, 2021.

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: The Department of Health and Human Services is the lead for this action.

✓ **SB 440:** Amends NRS 372.7281 to create a sales tax holiday, on Nevada Day (observed) and weekend immediately following the holiday for uniformed members of the Nevada National Guard who are on active status and are residents of Nevada, along with members of their household.

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Senate Committee on Finance.

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: July 1, 2021, expires by limitation on June 30, 2031

Status: Signed into law by the Governor

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: The Department of Taxation and the Nevada National Guard are the leads for this action.

✓ **SJR 06:** Expresses support for the creation of a federal retirement plan for spouses of members of the military (BDR R-384).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections.

Votes: Passed Assembly unanimously, 1 excused, Senate unanimously

Effective Date: May 18, 2021

Status: Enrolled and delivered to Secretary of State. File No. 25

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: The Legislative Council Bureau is the lead for this action

LEGISLATION NOT PASSED

✗ **AB 142:** Enacts the Nurse Licensure Compact. (BDR 54-644)

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblyman Philip P.K. O'Neill, Assemblywoman Robin Titus, Assemblywoman Jill Dickman, Assemblywoman Jill Tolles, and Senator Joseph Hardy.

Votes: Not voted upon

Effective Date: Not applicable

Status: Failed by deadline

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: No NDVS action required

✗ AB 172: Requires the Nevada Veterans Services Commission to conduct an equity study relating to the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (BDR S-712).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow, and Assemblywoman Brittney Miller.

Votes: Not voted upon

Effective Date: Not applicable

Status: Failed by deadline

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: No NDVS action required

✗ AB 179: Exempts from the payment of certain parking fees vehicles with certain specially designed license plates for family members of a person killed in the line of duty while on active duty.

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblyman Gregory Hafen, Assemblyman Tom Roberts, and Assemblywoman Clara Thomas.

Votes: Not voted upon

Effective Date: Not applicable

Status: Failed by deadline

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: No NDVS action required

✗ AB 206: Provides that certain pupil whose parents or guardians are members of the Armed Forces of the United States are eligible to enroll in a program of distance education.

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblyman Glen Leavitt and Assemblywoman Robin Titus.

Votes: Not voted upon

Effective Date: Not applicable

Status: Failed by deadline

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: No NDVS action required

✗ AB 252: Exempts fully disabled veterans from the payment of any fees and governmental services taxes required to register or obtain license plates for certain vehicles (BDR 32-661).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblyman Richard McArthur, Assemblyman Jim Wheeler, Assemblyman Andy Matthews, and Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner.

Votes: Not voted upon

Effective Date: Not applicable

Status: Failed by deadline

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: No NDVS action required

✗ AB 439: Requires regulatory bodies to issue a license by endorsement to engage in a profession or an occupation to certain persons affiliated with the Armed Forces of the United States.

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Assemblyman Committee on Commerce and Labor.

Votes: Not voted upon

Effective Date: Not applicable

Status: Failed by deadline

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: No NDVS action required

✗ SB 263: Revises the deadlines by which military and overseas voters may submit certain applications to register to vote and cast a ballot (BDR 24-896).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by Senator James Settelmeyer.

Votes: Not voted upon

Effective Date: Not applicable

Status: Failed by deadline

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: No NDVS action required

✗ SB 402: Authorizes spouses of active-duty service members to apply for a license by endorsement to practice in Nevada. (BDR 54-709).

Sponsor(s): Introduced by the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor

Votes: Not voted upon

Effective Date: Not applicable

Status: Failed by deadline

NDVS Director's Plan for Implementation: No NDVS action required

6. Budget Items:

a. In the 81st Session, Nevada's Legislature approved budgets for veterans' services included General Fund Appropriations of \$6,534,538 and Federal/other spending authority of \$85,871,987. See the table below for the budget account breakout.

Budget Account	General / Other State Funds	Federal and Other Spending Authority	Total (\$)
2560: Veterans Services	5,819,490	4,695,029	10,514,519
2561: Southern Nevada State Veterans Home	0	63,718,061	63,718,061
2569: Northern Nevada State Veterans Home	715,048	17,458,897	18,173,945
Total (\$)	6,534,538	85,871,987	92,406,525

b. Additionally, four critical Veterans Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) valued at \$9,121,381 were approved:

Project	State Funding	Other Funding	Total (\$)
Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery Expansion	607,271	3,541,019	4,148,290
Advance Planning for the Remodel of the Southern Nevada State Veterans Home	1,635,877	2,593,840	4,229,717
Remodel of the Northern Nevada State Veterans Memorial Cemetery Pavilion	297,774	0	297,774
Temperature Control Replacements, Southern Nevada State Veterans Home	177,212	268,388	445,600
Total (\$)	2,718,134	6,403,247	9,121,381

7. For additional information, please contact Mr. David Johnson at johnsond@veterans.nv.gov.