

SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETY-FOURTH SESSION

S.F. No. 1959

(SENATE AUTHORS: PUTNAM, Carlson and Mitchell)

Table with columns: DATE, D-PG, OFFICIAL STATUS. Rows include dates from 02/27/2025 to 05/18/2025 and corresponding bill numbers and actions.

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to state government; establishing a budget for the Department of Military
1.3 Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs; modifying various veterans services
1.4 and benefits provisions; modifying certain state active service provisions; providing
1.5 for the state armory building commission; providing benefits to veterans of the
1.6 Secret War in Laos; establishing a task force; requiring the commissioner of
1.7 administration to place a memorial plaque honoring Gold Star and Blue Star
1.8 families on State Capitol grounds; requiring reports; appropriating money;
1.9 amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections 13.461, subdivision 27; 192.49,
1.10 subdivisions 1, 2, by adding a subdivision; 193.143; 197.065; 197.236, subdivisions
1.11 8, 9; 197.608, subdivision 6; 197.75, subdivision 1; 197.791, subdivision 4; Laws
1.12 2023, chapter 38, article 1, section 3, subdivision 2, as amended; proposing coding
1.13 for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 197.

1.14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.15 ARTICLE 1
1.16 MILITARY AFFAIRS AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS

1.17 Section 1. APPROPRIATIONS.

1.18 The sums shown in the columns marked "Appropriations" are appropriated to the agencies
1.19 and for the purposes specified in this article. The appropriations are from the general fund,
1.20 or another named fund, and are available for the fiscal years indicated for each purpose.
1.21 The figures "2026" and "2027" used in this article mean that the appropriations listed under
1.22 them are available for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, or June 30, 2027, respectively.
1.23 "The first year" is fiscal year 2026. "The second year" is fiscal year 2027. "The biennium"
1.24 is fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

1.25 APPROPRIATIONS
1.26 Available for the Year

	<u>Ending June 30</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>
2.1		
2.2		
2.3	<b>Sec. 2. <u>MILITARY AFFAIRS</u></b>	
2.4	<b><u>Subdivision 1. Total Appropriation</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 29,487,000</u></b>
2.5		<b><u>\$ 33,458,000</u></b>
2.6	<u>The amounts that may be spent for each</u>	
2.7	<u>purpose are specified in the following</u>	
2.8	<u>subdivisions. The base for this appropriation</u>	
2.9	<u>is \$27,458,000 in fiscal year 2028 and each</u>	
2.10	<u>fiscal year thereafter.</u>	
2.11	<b><u>Subd. 2. Maintenance of Training Facilities</u></b>	<b><u>10,067,000</u></b>
2.12		<b><u>10,067,000</u></b>
2.13	<b><u>Subd. 3. General Support</u></b>	<b><u>5,006,000</u></b>
2.14		<b><u>4,977,000</u></b>
2.15	<b><u>Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F). Of this</u></b>	
2.16	<u>amount, \$242,000 the first year is for</u>	
2.17	<u>administrative and payroll costs to operate</u>	
2.18	<u>Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) initiatives</u>	
2.19	<u>across the Minnesota Army National Guard.</u>	
2.20	<u>This is a onetime appropriation.</u>	
2.21	<b><u>Subd. 4. Enlistment Incentives</u></b>	<b><u>14,114,000</u></b>
2.22		<b><u>18,114,000</u></b>
2.23	<u>The base for this appropriation is \$12,114,000</u>	
2.24	<u>in fiscal year 2028 and each fiscal year</u>	
2.25	<u>thereafter.</u>	
2.26	<u>The appropriations in this subdivision are</u>	
2.27	<u>available until June 30, 2029.</u>	
2.28	<u>If the amount for fiscal year 2026 is</u>	
2.29	<u>insufficient, the amount for 2027 is available</u>	
2.30	<u>in fiscal year 2026. Any unencumbered</u>	
2.31	<u>balance does not cancel at the end of the first</u>	
	<u>year and is available for the second year.</u>	
	<b><u>Subd. 5. Emergency Services</u></b>	<b><u>300,000</u></b>
		<b><u>300,000</u></b>
	<b>Sec. 3. <u>VETERANS AFFAIRS</u></b>	
	<b><u>Subdivision 1. Total Appropriation</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 142,457,000</u></b>
		<b><u>\$ 146,710,000</u></b>

3.1 The base for this appropriation is  
 3.2 \$151,140,000 in fiscal year 2028 and each  
 3.3 fiscal year thereafter. The amounts that may  
 3.4 be spent for each purpose are specified in the  
 3.5 following subdivisions.

3.6	<u>Subd. 2. <b>Veterans Programs and Services</b></u>	<u>31,055,000</u>	<u>30,940,000</u>
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3.7 The amounts that may be spent for each  
 3.8 purpose are specified in the following  
 3.9 paragraphs.

3.10 (a) **State Veterans Cemeteries.** \$3,782,000  
 3.11 each year is for the operation of the state  
 3.12 veterans cemeteries.

3.13 (b) **Veterans Service Organizations.**  
 3.14 \$500,000 each year is for grants to the  
 3.15 following congressionally chartered veterans  
 3.16 service organizations as designated by the  
 3.17 commissioner: Disabled American Veterans,  
 3.18 Military Order of the Purple Heart, the  
 3.19 American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars,  
 3.20 AMVETS, and Paralyzed Veterans of  
 3.21 America. This funding must be allocated in  
 3.22 direct proportion to the funding currently  
 3.23 being provided by the commissioner to these  
 3.24 organizations.

3.25 (c) **Honor Guards.** \$200,000 each year is for  
 3.26 compensation for honor guards at the funerals  
 3.27 of veterans under Minnesota Statutes, section  
 3.28 197.231.

3.29 (d) **Minnesota GI Bill.** \$200,000 each year is  
 3.30 for the costs of administering the Minnesota  
 3.31 GI Bill postsecondary educational benefits,  
 3.32 on-the-job training, and apprenticeship  
 3.33 program under Minnesota Statutes, section  
 3.34 197.791.

4.1 (e) Gold Star Program. \$100,000 each year  
4.2 is for administering the Gold Star Program for  
4.3 surviving family members of deceased  
4.4 veterans.

4.5 (f) County Veterans Service Office.  
4.6 \$1,610,000 each year is for the County  
4.7 Veterans Service Office grant program under  
4.8 Minnesota Statutes, section 197.608. Of this  
4.9 amount, \$20,000 is for a women veterans  
4.10 technical assistance coordinator, \$20,000 is  
4.11 for a veteran suicide prevention technical  
4.12 assistance coordinator, and \$20,000 is for a  
4.13 justice-involved veteran technical assistance  
4.14 coordinator. Any unencumbered balance in  
4.15 the first year does not cancel and is available  
4.16 in the second year.

4.17 (g) Camp Bliss. \$150,000 each year is for a  
4.18 grant to Independent Lifestyles, Inc., to  
4.19 provide therapy, transportation, and activities  
4.20 customized for veterans who are Minnesota  
4.21 residents and the veterans' spouses, domestic  
4.22 partners, and children at Camp Bliss in the  
4.23 city of Walker. The commissioner of veterans  
4.24 affairs must report to the chairs and ranking  
4.25 minority members of the legislative  
4.26 committees with jurisdiction over veterans  
4.27 affairs on:

4.28 (1) the number of veterans and veterans'  
4.29 family members served; and  
4.30 (2) a detailed explanation of expenditures of  
4.31 the grant money.

4.32 (h) CORE Program. \$1,525,000 the first year  
4.33 and \$1,225,000 the second year are for the

5.1 Counseling and Case Management Outreach  
5.2 Referral and Education (CORE) program.

5.3 Of this amount, \$300,000 the first year is to  
5.4 provide:

5.5 (1) home-delivered meals to veterans outside  
5.6 of Hennepin and Ramsey Counties; and

5.7 (2) technical, enrollment, outreach, and  
5.8 volunteer recruitment assistance to member  
5.9 programs.

5.10 The grantee must report to the commissioner  
5.11 of veterans affairs and the chairs and ranking  
5.12 minority members of the legislative  
5.13 committees with jurisdiction over veterans  
5.14 affairs policy and finance by September 1 each  
5.15 year with a detailed explanation of how the  
5.16 grant money was used and the number of  
5.17 veterans and service members served by the  
5.18 program. Any unencumbered balance in the  
5.19 first year does not cancel at the end of the first  
5.20 year and is available in the second year. This  
5.21 is a onetime appropriation.

5.22 **(i) Recently Separated Veterans Program.**  
5.23 \$300,000 each year is for operation of the  
5.24 recently separated veterans program. The  
5.25 commissioner of veterans affairs may use  
5.26 Department of Defense and other veteran data  
5.27 that was provided with an appropriate  
5.28 disclosure to assist with connecting veterans  
5.29 to resources and new programming. The  
5.30 commissioner may use money for personnel,  
5.31 research, marketing, technology solutions, and  
5.32 professional or technical contracts.

5.33 **(j) Homeless Veterans and SOAR Program.**  
5.34 \$1,344,000 each year is to operate the

6.1 homeless veteran registry and homeless  
6.2 programs and to assist veterans, former service  
6.3 members, and veterans' and former service  
6.4 members' dependents with obtaining federal  
6.5 benefits through the Social Security  
6.6 Administration. The commissioner of veterans  
6.7 affairs may use money for personnel, training,  
6.8 research, marketing, and professional or  
6.9 technical contracts.

6.10 **(k) State Soldiers Assistance Program.**  
6.11 \$5,600,000 each year is for veteran financial  
6.12 assistance through the state soldiers assistance  
6.13 program.

6.14 **(l) Higher Education Veterans Assistance.**  
6.15 \$1,629,000 each year is for veterans higher  
6.16 education assistance.

6.17 **(m) Claims and Outreach Office. \$3,621,000**  
6.18 each year is for the claims and outreach office  
6.19 to assist veterans and the veterans' families in  
6.20 accessing benefits and services.

6.21 **(n) Minnesota Assistance Council for**  
6.22 **Veterans. \$1,075,000 each year is for grants**  
6.23 to the Minnesota Assistance Council for  
6.24 Veterans to provide assistance throughout  
6.25 Minnesota to veterans and veterans' families  
6.26 who are homeless or in danger of  
6.27 homelessness, including assistance with:

6.28 (1) supportive services to maintain housing;

6.29 (2) employment;

6.30 (3) legal issues;

6.31 (4) housing and housing-related costs;

6.32 (5) transportation;

7.1 (6) the acquisition and creation of permanent  
7.2 supportive housing; and

7.3 (7) property management of permanent  
7.4 supportive housing.

7.5 Any unencumbered balance remaining in this  
7.6 paragraph in the first year does not cancel and  
7.7 is available for the second year. Assistance  
7.8 authorized under this paragraph must be  
7.9 provided only to a veteran who has resided in  
7.10 Minnesota for 30 days prior to the veteran's  
7.11 application for assistance and according to  
7.12 other guidelines established by the  
7.13 commissioner. To avoid duplication of  
7.14 services, the commissioner must ensure that  
7.15 this assistance is coordinated with all other  
7.16 available programs for veterans.

7.17 **(o) Veterans of Special Guerilla Units and**  
7.18 **Irregular Forces in Laos Advisory Task**  
7.19 **Force. \$118,000 the first year is for the**  
7.20 **commissioner to staff and support the work**  
7.21 **of the Veterans of Special Guerilla Units and**  
7.22 **Irregular Forces in Laos Advisory Task Force.**

7.23 **(p) Hometown Hero Outdoors. \$100,000 the**  
7.24 **first year is for a grant to Hometown Hero**  
7.25 **Outdoors, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization**  
7.26 **based in Stillwater, Minnesota, to fund outdoor**  
7.27 **recreational activities and mental health**  
7.28 **services for currently serving military**  
7.29 **personnel and veterans to promote positive**  
7.30 **mental health and interactions with mental**  
7.31 **health service professionals; to promote**  
7.32 **longevity and quality of life through outdoor**  
7.33 **activities and mental health services, including**  
7.34 **public education; and to ensure that the**  
7.35 **organization is able to continue supporting**

8.1 persons who are currently serving or have  
 8.2 served in the military. Hometown Hero  
 8.3 Outdoors must report to the commissioner of  
 8.4 veterans affairs and the chairs and ranking  
 8.5 minority members of the legislative  
 8.6 committees with jurisdiction over veterans  
 8.7 affairs policy and finance no later than  
 8.8 September 1, 2026. The report must include,  
 8.9 at a minimum, a detailed explanation of how  
 8.10 the grant money was used and the number of  
 8.11 veterans served by the program.

8.12 **(q) Minnesota Military and Veterans**  
 8.13 **Museum. \$300,000 each year is for a grant to**  
 8.14 **the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum**  
 8.15 **for museum staff to provide direct services to**  
 8.16 **veterans and their families.**

8.17 **Subd. 3. Veterans Health Care** 111,402,000 115,770,000

8.18 (a) \$110,302,000 the first year and  
 8.19 \$114,670,000 the second year may be  
 8.20 transferred to a veterans homes special  
 8.21 revenue account in the special revenue fund  
 8.22 in the same manner as other receipts are  
 8.23 deposited according to Minnesota Statutes,  
 8.24 section 198.34, and are appropriated to the  
 8.25 commissioner of veterans affairs for the  
 8.26 operation of veterans homes facilities and  
 8.27 programs. The base for this transfer is  
 8.28 \$119,100,000 in fiscal year 2028 and each  
 8.29 fiscal year thereafter.

8.30 (b) The department shall seek opportunities  
 8.31 to maximize federal reimbursements of  
 8.32 Medicare-eligible expenses and provide annual  
 8.33 reports to the commissioner of management  
 8.34 and budget on the federal Medicare  
 8.35 reimbursements that are received. Contingent



9.1 upon future federal Medicare receipts,  
9.2 reductions to the veterans homes' general fund  
9.3 appropriation may be made.

9.4 (c) \$400,000 each year is for the department  
9.5 to staff Veteran Community Health Navigators  
9.6 in community-based hospitals.

9.7 (d) \$700,000 each year is for the department  
9.8 to operate the veteran suicide prevention  
9.9 program. The commissioner shall develop a  
9.10 comprehensive plan to prevent Minnesota  
9.11 veterans from dying by suicide. The plan must  
9.12 include:

9.13 (1) a community integration and collaboration  
9.14 strategy that brings together veteran-serving  
9.15 organizations to provide veterans with  
9.16 coordinated services and supports, including  
9.17 services and supports related to employment,  
9.18 health, housing, benefits, recreation, education,  
9.19 and social connections;

9.20 (2) strategies to promote a sense of belonging  
9.21 and purpose among veterans by connecting  
9.22 veterans with each other, with civilians, and  
9.23 with the veteran's communities through a  
9.24 range of activities, including physical activity,  
9.25 community service, and disaster response  
9.26 efforts; and

9.27 (3) an implementation strategy that identifies  
9.28 opportunities to coordinate existing efforts  
9.29 within federal, state, local, and Tribal  
9.30 governments and nongovernmental entities  
9.31 and includes a description of the policy  
9.32 changes and resources that are required to  
9.33 prevent veteran suicides.

10.1 The commissioner must submit a report  
 10.2 containing the required plan to the chairs and  
 10.3 ranking minority members of the legislative  
 10.4 committees with jurisdiction over veterans  
 10.5 affairs policy and finance by February 15,  
 10.6 2026.

10.7 (e) The commissioner of veterans affairs is  
 10.8 not required to perform the annual calculation  
 10.9 of the cost of care for veterans homes in  
 10.10 Montevideo, Preston, and Bemidji in the first  
 10.11 year and second year. In the first year and  
 10.12 second year, the commissioner must calculate  
 10.13 the average daily cost of care per resident by  
 10.14 averaging the cost of care for veterans homes  
 10.15 in Luverne and Fergus Falls. The  
 10.16 commissioner must only use this method of  
 10.17 calculating the cost of care for veterans homes  
 10.18 in the first year and second year. This  
 10.19 paragraph expires June 30, 2027.

10.20 Sec. 4. Laws 2023, chapter 38, article 1, section 3, subdivision 2, as amended by Laws  
 10.21 2024, chapter 100, section 23, is amended to read:

10.22 Subd. 2. <b>Veterans Programs and Services</b>	56,523,000	31,214,000
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10.23 The amounts that may be spent for each  
 10.24 purpose are specified in the following  
 10.25 subdivisions. The base is \$30,258,000 in fiscal  
 10.26 year 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter.

10.27 **(a) State's Veterans Cemeteries.** \$4,282,000  
 10.28 each year is for the operation of the state's  
 10.29 veterans cemeteries. The base for this  
 10.30 appropriation is \$3,782,000 in fiscal year 2026  
 10.31 and each fiscal year thereafter.

10.32 **(b) Veterans Service Organizations.**  
 10.33 \$500,000 each year is for grants to the  
 10.34 following congressionally chartered veterans

11.1 service organizations as designated by the  
11.2 commissioner: Disabled American Veterans,  
11.3 Military Order of the Purple Heart, the  
11.4 American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars,  
11.5 Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, and  
11.6 Paralyzed Veterans of America. This funding  
11.7 must be allocated in direct proportion to the  
11.8 funding currently being provided by the  
11.9 commissioner to these organizations.

11.10 **(c) Honor Guards.** \$200,000 each year is for  
11.11 compensation for honor guards at the funerals  
11.12 of veterans under Minnesota Statutes, section  
11.13 197.231.

11.14 **(d) Minnesota GI Bill.** \$200,000 each year is  
11.15 for the costs of administering the Minnesota  
11.16 GI Bill postsecondary educational benefits,  
11.17 on-the-job training, and apprenticeship  
11.18 program under Minnesota Statutes, section  
11.19 197.791.

11.20 **(e) Gold Star Program.** \$100,000 each year  
11.21 is for administering the Gold Star Program for  
11.22 surviving family members of deceased  
11.23 veterans.

11.24 **(f) County Veterans Service Office.**  
11.25 \$1,550,000 each year is for funding the  
11.26 County Veterans Service Office grant program  
11.27 under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.608.

11.28 **(g) Camp Bliss.** \$150,000 each year is for a  
11.29 grant to Camp Bliss as provided under article  
11.30 2, section 9.

11.31 **(h) Veterans on the Lake.** \$50,000 each year  
11.32 is for a grant to Veterans on the Lake for  
11.33 expenses related to retreats for veterans,  
11.34 including therapy, transportation, and activities

12.1 customized for veterans. These are onetime  
12.2 appropriations.

12.3 **(i) Veteran Resilience Project.** \$300,000 each  
12.4 year is for a grant to the veteran resilience  
12.5 project. Grant funds must be used to make eye  
12.6 movement desensitization and reprocessing  
12.7 therapy available to veterans, veterans'  
12.8 spouses, current military service members,  
12.9 and current military service members' spouses  
12.10 who are suffering from posttraumatic stress  
12.11 disorder and trauma. The base for this  
12.12 appropriation is \$200,000 in fiscal year 2026  
12.13 and each fiscal year thereafter.

12.14 The veteran resilience project must report to  
12.15 the commissioner of veterans affairs and the  
12.16 chairs and ranking minority members of the  
12.17 legislative committees with jurisdiction over  
12.18 veterans affairs policy and finance by January  
12.19 15 of each year on the program. The report  
12.20 must include an overview of the program's  
12.21 budget, a detailed explanation of program  
12.22 expenditures, the number of veterans and  
12.23 service members served by the program, and  
12.24 a list and explanation of the services provided  
12.25 to program participants.

12.26 **(j) CORE Program.** \$1,225,000 each year is  
12.27 for the Counseling and Case Management  
12.28 Outreach Referral and Education (CORE)  
12.29 program.

12.30 **(k) LinkVet Call Center.** \$369,000 each year  
12.31 is for the operation of the state's LinkVet Call  
12.32 Center.

12.33 **(l) Recently Separated Veterans Program.**  
12.34 \$350,000 each year is for operation of the

13.1 recently separated veterans program. The  
13.2 commissioner of veterans affairs may use  
13.3 Department of Defense and other veteran data  
13.4 that were provided with an appropriate  
13.5 disclosure to assist with connecting veterans  
13.6 to resources and new programming. The  
13.7 commissioner may use money for personnel,  
13.8 research, marketing, technology solutions, and  
13.9 professional or technical contracts. The base  
13.10 for this appropriation is \$300,000 in fiscal year  
13.11 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter.

13.12 **(m) Homeless Veterans and SOAR**  
13.13 **Program.** \$1,035,000 each year is to operate  
13.14 the homeless veteran registry and homeless  
13.15 programs and to assist veterans, former service  
13.16 members, and veterans' and former service  
13.17 members' dependents with obtaining federal  
13.18 benefits through the Social Security  
13.19 Administration. The commissioner of veterans  
13.20 affairs may use money for personnel, training,  
13.21 research, marketing, and professional or  
13.22 technical contracts. The base for this  
13.23 appropriation is \$1,344,000 in fiscal year 2026  
13.24 and each fiscal year thereafter.

13.25 **(n) Minnesota Assistance Council for**  
13.26 **Veterans.** \$7,865,000 the first year and  
13.27 \$1,075,000 the second year are for grants to  
13.28 the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans  
13.29 to provide assistance throughout Minnesota  
13.30 to veterans and veterans' families who are  
13.31 homeless or in danger of homelessness,  
13.32 including assistance with:  
13.33 (1) supportive services to maintain housing;  
13.34 (2) employment;

- 14.1 (3) legal issues;
- 14.2 (4) housing and housing-related costs;
- 14.3 (5) transportation;
- 14.4 (6) the acquisition and creation of permanent
- 14.5 supportive housing; and
- 14.6 (7) property management of permanent
- 14.7 supportive housing.
- 14.8 Of these amounts, \$6,350,000 the first year is
- 14.9 for the establishment of permanent supportive
- 14.10 housing options for homeless veterans and
- 14.11 former service members. This is a onetime
- 14.12 appropriation and is available until June 30,
- 14.13 2026. \$440,000 the first year is for the direct
- 14.14 veteran assistance grant. This is a onetime
- 14.15 appropriation. Any unencumbered balance
- 14.16 remaining in this subdivision in the first year
- 14.17 for grants to the Minnesota Assistance Council
- 14.18 for Veterans does not cancel and is available
- 14.19 for the second year. Assistance authorized
- 14.20 under this paragraph must be provided only
- 14.21 to a veteran who has resided in Minnesota for
- 14.22 30 days prior to the veteran's application for
- 14.23 assistance and according to other guidelines
- 14.24 established by the commissioner. To avoid
- 14.25 duplication of services, the commissioner must
- 14.26 ensure that this assistance is coordinated with
- 14.27 all other available programs for veterans.
- 14.28 **(o) Veterans Bonus Program.** \$15,000,000
- 14.29 the first year is for service bonuses to
- 14.30 Post-9/11 Veterans and Gold Star families
- 14.31 under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.79. This
- 14.32 is a onetime appropriation and is available
- 14.33 until June 30, 2024.

15.1 (p) **Metro Meals on Wheels.** \$540,000 each  
15.2 year is for a grant to Metro Meals on Wheels  
15.3 to provide: (1) home-delivered meals to  
15.4 veterans; and (2) technical, enrollment,  
15.5 outreach, and volunteer recruitment assistance  
15.6 to member programs. Metro Meals on Wheels  
15.7 must report to the commissioner of veterans  
15.8 affairs and the chairs and ranking minority  
15.9 members of the legislative committees with  
15.10 jurisdiction over veterans affairs policy and  
15.11 finance by September 1 each year with a  
15.12 detailed explanation of how the grant money  
15.13 was used and the number of veterans and  
15.14 service members served by the program. ~~This~~  
15.15 ~~is a onetime appropriation. Any unencumbered~~  
15.16 ~~balance does not cancel at the end of the first~~  
15.17 ~~year and is available for the second year. This~~  
15.18 is a onetime appropriation and is available  
15.19 until June 30, 2027.

15.20 (q) **Minnesota Military and Veterans**  
15.21 **Museum.** \$225,000 the second year is for a  
15.22 grant to the Minnesota Military and Veterans  
15.23 Museum for museum staff to provide direct  
15.24 services to veterans and their families. The  
15.25 base for this appropriation is \$300,000 in fiscal  
15.26 year 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter.

15.27 (r) **Every Third Saturday.** \$100,000 each  
15.28 year is for a grant to Every Third Saturday to  
15.29 provide veterans with emergency assistance  
15.30 and internships. Every Third Saturday must  
15.31 report to the commissioner of veterans affairs  
15.32 and the chairs and ranking minority members  
15.33 of the legislative committees with jurisdiction  
15.34 over veterans affairs policy and finance no  
15.35 later than September 1, 2024, and by

16.1 September 1 of each subsequent year. Each  
 16.2 report must include, at a minimum, a detailed  
 16.3 explanation of how the grant money was used  
 16.4 and the number of veterans served by the  
 16.5 program. ~~These are onetime appropriations.~~  
 16.6 These are onetime appropriations and are  
 16.7 available until June 30, 2026.

16.8 **(s) Veteran Homelessness Initiative.**  
 16.9 \$4,311,000 the first year and \$1,311,000 the  
 16.10 second year are for an initiative to prevent and  
 16.11 end veteran homelessness.

16.12 **(t) Veterans Campground Wastewater**  
 16.13 **System Upgrades.** \$744,000 the first year is  
 16.14 for one or more grants to the Veterans  
 16.15 Campground on Big Marine Lake, a 501(c)(3)  
 16.16 nonprofit organization, to design, engineer,  
 16.17 permit, and construct wastewater systems on  
 16.18 campground property to increase the capacity  
 16.19 of wastewater systems. This is a onetime  
 16.20 appropriation.

## 16.21 **ARTICLE 2**

### 16.22 **MILITARY AFFAIRS AND VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY**

16.23 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 13.461, subdivision 27, is amended to read:

16.24 Subd. 27. ~~State soldiers assistance program~~ **Veterans affairs programs.** Access to  
 16.25 information for purposes of verifying eligibility for the State Soldiers Assistance Program,  
 16.26 the Veterans Stable Housing Initiative, and veterans programs is governed by section  
 16.27 197.065.

16.28 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 192.49, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

16.29 Subdivision 1. **Officers.** Every commissioned officer of the military forces shall receive  
 16.30 from the state, while engaged in any state active service ~~ordered by the governor~~ as defined  
 16.31 in section 190.05, subdivision 5a, pay and allowances at the rate now or hereafter paid or  
 16.32 allowed by law to officers of the same grade and length of service in the armed forces of  
 16.33 the United States, but not less than \$130 a day.



17.1 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 192.49, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

17.2 Subd. 2. **Enlisted persons.** When called into state active service by the governor, other  
17.3 than for encampment or maneuvers, including the time necessarily consumed in travel, each  
17.4 enlisted person of the military forces shall be paid by the state the pay and the allowances,  
17.5 when not furnished in kind, provided by law for enlisted persons of similar grade, rating,  
17.6 and length of service in the armed forces of the United States, or \$130 a day, whichever is  
17.7 more.

17.8 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 192.49, is amended by adding a subdivision to  
17.9 read:

17.10 Subd. 2a. **Pension offset stipend.** The adjutant general is authorized to pay service  
17.11 members ordered into state active service a stipend equivalent to five percent of basic pay  
17.12 for the period of duty to compensate the service member for pension inequity compared to  
17.13 similar federal service.

17.14 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 193.143, is amended to read:

17.15 **193.143 STATE ARMORY BUILDING COMMISSION, POWERS.**

17.16 Such corporation, subject to the conditions and limitations prescribed in sections 193.141  
17.17 to 193.149, shall possess all the powers of a body corporate necessary and convenient to  
17.18 accomplish the objectives and perform the duties prescribed by sections 193.141 to 193.149,  
17.19 including the following, which shall not be construed as a limitation upon the general powers  
17.20 hereby conferred:

17.21 (1) To acquire by lease, purchase, gift, or condemnation proceedings all necessary right,  
17.22 title, and interest in and to the lands required for a site for a new armory and all other real  
17.23 or personal property required for the purposes contemplated by the Military Code and to  
17.24 hold and dispose of the same, subject to the conditions and limitations herein prescribed;  
17.25 provided that any such real or personal property or interest therein may be so acquired or  
17.26 accepted subject to any condition which may be imposed thereon by the grantor or donor  
17.27 and agreed to by such corporation not inconsistent with the proper use of such property by  
17.28 the state for armory or military purposes as herein provided.

17.29 (2) To exercise the power of eminent domain in the manner provided by chapter 117,  
17.30 for the purpose of acquiring any property which such corporation is herein authorized to  
17.31 acquire by condemnation; provided, that the corporation may take possession of any such  
17.32 property so to be acquired at any time after the filing of the petition describing the same in

18.1 condemnation proceedings; provided further, that this shall not preclude the corporation  
18.2 from abandoning the condemnation of any such property in any case where possession  
18.3 thereof has not been taken.

18.4 (3) To construct and equip new armories as authorized herein; to pay therefor out of the  
18.5 funds obtained as hereinafter provided and to hold, manage, and dispose of such armory,  
18.6 equipment, and site as hereinafter provided. The total amount of bonds issued on account  
18.7 of such armories shall not exceed the amount of the cost thereof; provided also, that the  
18.8 total bonded indebtedness of the commission shall not at any time exceed the aggregate  
18.9 sum of ~~\$15,000,000~~ \$45,000,000.

18.10 (4) To provide partnerships with federal and state governments and to match federal and  
18.11 local funds, when available.

18.12 (5) To sue and be sued.

18.13 (6) To contract and be contracted with in any matter connected with any purpose or  
18.14 activity within the powers of such corporations as herein specified; provided, that no officer  
18.15 or member of such corporation shall be personally interested, directly or indirectly, in any  
18.16 contract in which such corporation is interested.

18.17 (7) To employ any and all professional and nonprofessional services and all agents,  
18.18 employees, workers, and servants necessary and proper for the purposes and activities of  
18.19 such corporation as authorized or contemplated herein and to pay for the same out of any  
18.20 portion of the income of the corporation available for such purposes or activities. The officers  
18.21 and members of such corporation shall not receive any compensation therefrom, but may  
18.22 receive their reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with the performance  
18.23 of their duties; provided however, that whenever the duties of any member of the commission  
18.24 require full time and attention the commission may compensate the member therefor at such  
18.25 rates as it may determine.

18.26 (8) To borrow money and issue bonds for the purposes and in the manner and within  
18.27 the limitations herein specified, and to pledge any and all property and income of such  
18.28 corporation acquired or received as herein provided to secure the payment of such bonds,  
18.29 subject to the provisions and limitations herein prescribed, and to redeem any such bonds  
18.30 if so provided therein or in the mortgage or trust deed accompanying the same.

18.31 (9) To use for the following purposes any available money received by such corporation  
18.32 from any source as herein provided in excess of those required for the payment of the cost  
18.33 of such armory and for the payment of any bonds issued by the corporation and interest

19.1 thereon according to the terms of such bonds or of any mortgage or trust deed accompanying  
19.2 the same:

19.3 (a) to pay the necessary incidental expenses of carrying on the business and activities  
19.4 of the corporation as herein authorized;

19.5 (b) to pay the cost of operating, maintaining, repairing, and improving such new armories;

19.6 (c) if any further excess money remains, to purchase upon the open market at or above  
19.7 or below the face or par value thereof any bonds issued by the corporation as herein  
19.8 authorized, provided that any bonds so purchased shall thereupon be canceled.

19.9 (10) To adopt and use a corporate seal.

19.10 (11) To adopt all needful bylaws and rules for the conduct of business and affairs of  
19.11 such corporation and for the management and use of all armories while under the ownership  
19.12 and control of such corporation as herein provided, not inconsistent with the use of such  
19.13 armory for armory or military purposes.

19.14 (12) Such corporation shall issue no stock.

19.15 (13) No officer or member of such corporation shall have any personal share or interest  
19.16 in any funds or property of the corporation or be subject to any personal liability by reason  
19.17 of any liability of the corporation.

19.18 (14) The Minnesota State Armory Building Commission created under section 193.142  
19.19 shall keep all money and credits received by it as a single fund, to be designated as the  
19.20 "Minnesota State Armory Building Commission fund," with separate accounts for each  
19.21 armory; and the commission may make transfers of money from funds appertaining to any  
19.22 armory under its control for use for any other such armory; provided such transfers shall  
19.23 be made only from money on hand, from time to time, in excess of the amounts required  
19.24 to meet payments of interest or principal on bonds or other obligations appertaining to the  
19.25 armory to which such funds pertain and only when necessary to pay expenses of construction,  
19.26 operation, maintenance, debt service, and other obligations reasonable and necessary, of  
19.27 such other armory; provided further, no such transfer of any money paid for the support of  
19.28 any armory by the municipality in which such armory is situated shall be made by the  
19.29 commission.

19.30 (15) The corporation created under section 193.142 may designate one or more state or  
19.31 national banks as depositories of its funds, and may provide, upon such conditions as the  
19.32 corporation may determine, that the treasurer of the corporation shall be exempt from

20.1 personal liability for loss of funds deposited in any such depository due to the insolvency  
20.2 or other acts or omissions of such depository.

20.3 (16) The governor is empowered to apply for grants of money, equipment, and materials  
20.4 which may be made available to the states by the federal government for leasing, building,  
20.5 and equipping armories for the use of the military forces of the state which are reserve  
20.6 components of the armed forces of the United States, whenever the governor is satisfied  
20.7 that the conditions under which such grants are offered by the federal government, are for  
20.8 the best interests of the state and are not inconsistent with the laws of the state relating to  
20.9 armories, and to accept such grants in the name of the state. The Minnesota State Armory  
20.10 Building Commission is designated as the agency of the state to receive such grants and to  
20.11 use them for armory purposes as prescribed in this chapter, and by federal laws, and  
20.12 regulations not inconsistent therewith.

20.13 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.065, is amended to read:

20.14 **197.065 ACCESS TO DATABASE.**

20.15 (a) Notwithstanding section 13.46, subdivision 2, the commissioner of veterans affairs  
20.16 may electronically access the MAXIS database maintained by the Department of Human  
20.17 Services Children, Youth, and Families for the purpose of verifying eligibility status of  
20.18 applicants for benefits under the State Soldiers Assistance Program, the Veterans Stable  
20.19 Housing Initiative, and veterans programs. The commissioner may electronically access  
20.20 the MAXIS database to ensure that veterans are connected to all available state and federal  
20.21 resources for which the veterans are eligible.

20.22 (b) In order to access any private data on individuals, as defined by section 13.02,  
20.23 subdivision 12, pursuant to paragraph (a), the commissioner of veterans affairs must have  
20.24 received informed consent from the subject of the data.

20.25 Sec. 7. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.236, subdivision 8, is amended to read:

20.26 Subd. 8. **Eligibility.** Cemeteries must be operated solely for the burial of service members  
20.27 who die on active duty, eligible veterans, and their spouses and dependent children, as  
20.28 defined in United States Code, title 38, section ~~401~~ 2402, paragraph ~~(2)~~ (a), subparagraphs  
20.29 1 to 5 and 7.

20.30 Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.236, subdivision 9, is amended to read:

20.31 Subd. 9. **Burial fees.** (a) The commissioner of veterans affairs shall establish a fee  
20.32 schedule, which may be adjusted from time to time, for the interment of eligible spouses

21.1 and dependent children. The fees shall cover as nearly as practicable the actual costs of  
 21.2 interment, excluding the value of the plot.

21.3 (b) Upon application, the commissioner may waive or reduce the burial fee for an indigent  
 21.4 eligible person. The commissioner shall ~~develop~~ maintain a policy, eligibility standards,  
 21.5 and application form for requests to waive or reduce the burial fee to indigent eligible  
 21.6 applicants.

21.7 (c) No plot or interment fees may be charged for the burial of service members who die  
 21.8 on active duty or eligible veterans, as defined in United States Code, title 38, section ~~401~~  
 21.9 2402, paragraph (2) (a), subparagraphs 1 to 4 and 7.

21.10 **Sec. 9. [197.448] VETERAN OF THE SECRET WAR IN LAOS.**

21.11 **Subdivision 1. Definition.** As used in this section, the term "veteran of the Secret War  
 21.12 in Laos" means a person who resides in Minnesota and who:

21.13 (1) was naturalized as provided in section 2(1) of the federal Hmong Veterans'  
 21.14 Naturalization Act of 2000, Public Law 106-207; or

21.15 (2) is a person who the commissioner of veterans affairs determines served honorably  
 21.16 with a special guerrilla unit or with irregular forces that operated from a base in Laos in  
 21.17 support of the armed forces of the United States at any time during the period beginning  
 21.18 February 28, 1961, and ending May 14, 1975, and is a citizen of the United States or an  
 21.19 alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States.

21.20 **Subd. 2. Eligibility for benefits and privileges.** (a) A veteran of the Secret War in Laos,  
 21.21 as defined in subdivision 1, clause (1), is entitled to the benefits and privileges listed in  
 21.22 paragraph (d) the day following the effective date of this act.

21.23 (b) A veteran of the Secret War in Laos, as defined in subdivision 1, clause (2), is entitled  
 21.24 to the benefits and privileges listed in paragraph (d) after the commissioner of veterans  
 21.25 affairs verifies the person's veteran status. The commissioner must not begin accepting  
 21.26 applications for verification under this paragraph until the legislature enacts criteria and a  
 21.27 protocol to determine:

21.28 (1) which Minnesotans served in special guerilla units or with irregular forces in Laos;  
 21.29 and

21.30 (2) which of the Minnesotans who served in special guerilla units or with irregular forces  
 21.31 in Laos are deserving of Minnesota veterans benefits.

22.1 (c) If the commissioner verifies a person's status as a veteran of the Secret War in Laos,  
 22.2 the commissioner must provide the person with a certificate of eligibility for the benefits  
 22.3 and privileges listed in paragraph (d) on a form developed by the commissioner for this  
 22.4 purpose. The commissioner must develop the form required under this paragraph no later  
 22.5 than September 15, 2025.

22.6 (d) The following statutory benefits and privileges available to a veteran, as defined in  
 22.7 section 197.447, are also available to a veteran of the Secret War in Laos: section 171.07,  
 22.8 subdivision 15 (veteran designation on drivers' licenses and state identification cards);  
 22.9 section 197.23 (purchase of grave markers); section 197.231 (honor guards); section 197.236  
 22.10 (state veterans cemeteries); section 197.455 (veterans preference); section 197.4551  
 22.11 (permissive preference for veterans in private employment); section 197.63 (vital records,  
 22.12 certified copies); section 197.65 (renewal of professional licenses, motor vehicle registration,  
 22.13 and drivers' licenses); and section 197.987 (honor and remember flag).

22.14 Sec. 10. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.608, subdivision 6, is amended to read:

22.15 Subd. 6. **Grant amount.** (a) Each county is eligible to receive an annual grant of \$7,500  
 22.16 for the following purposes:

22.17 (1) to provide outreach to the county's veterans;

22.18 (2) to assist in the reintegration of combat veterans into society;

22.19 (3) to collaborate with other social service agencies, educational institutions, and other  
 22.20 community organizations for the purposes of enhancing services offered to veterans;

22.21 (4) to reduce homelessness among veterans; and

22.22 (5) to enhance the operations of the county veterans service office.

22.23 (b) In addition to the grant amount in paragraph (a), each county is eligible to receive  
 22.24 an additional annual grant under this paragraph. The amount of each additional annual grant  
 22.25 must be determined by the commissioner and may not exceed:

22.26 (1) \$0, if the county's veteran population is less than 1,000;

22.27 (2) \$2,500, if the county's veteran population is 1,000 or more but less than 3,000;

22.28 (3) \$5,000, if the county's veteran population is 3,000 or more but less than 5,000;

22.29 (4) \$7,500, if the county's veteran population is 5,000 or more but less than 10,000;

22.30 (5) \$10,000, if the county's veteran population is 10,000 or more but less than 20,000;

23.1 (6) \$15,000, if the county's veteran population is 20,000 or more but less than 30,000;  
 23.2 or

23.3 (7) \$20,000, if the county's veteran population is 30,000 or more.

23.4 (c) The Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers is eligible to receive  
 23.5 an annual grant of ~~\$100,000~~ \$160,000. The grant ~~shall~~ must be used for administrative costs  
 23.6 of the association, certification of mandated county veterans service officer training and  
 23.7 accreditation, and costs associated with reintegration services. Up to \$60,000 of this amount  
 23.8 may be used to train technical assistance coordinators and for technical assistance  
 23.9 coordinators to travel to consult with Minnesota counties on specific areas of expertise upon  
 23.10 request. The Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers executive board  
 23.11 must select technical assistance coordinators, who are either county veterans service officers  
 23.12 or assistant county veterans service officers, to serve for a minimum of one year.

23.13 (d) The veteran population of each county shall be determined by the figure supplied  
 23.14 by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, as adopted by the commissioner.

23.15 Sec. 11. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.75, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

23.16 Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) The definitions in this subdivision apply to this section.

23.17 (b) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of veterans affairs.

23.18 (c) "Deceased veteran" means a veteran who has died as a result of the person's military  
 23.19 service, as determined by the United States Veterans Administration, and who was a resident  
 23.20 of this state: (1) within six months of entering the United States armed forces, or (2) for the  
 23.21 six months preceding the veteran's date of death.

23.22 (d) "Eligible child" means a person who:

23.23 (1) is the natural or adopted child or stepchild of a deceased veteran; and

23.24 (2) is a student making satisfactory academic progress at an eligible institution of higher  
 23.25 education.

23.26 (e) "Eligible institution" means a postsecondary educational institution located in this  
 23.27 state that either is operated by this state or the Board of Regents of the University of  
 23.28 Minnesota, or is licensed or registered with the Office of Higher Education.

23.29 (f) "Eligible spouse" means the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran, regardless of  
 23.30 whether the surviving spouse remarries.

23.31 (g) "Eligible veteran" means a veteran who:

24.1 (1) is a student making satisfactory academic progress at an eligible institution of higher  
24.2 education;

24.3 (2) had Minnesota as the person's state of residence at the time of the person's enlistment  
24.4 or any reenlistment into the United States armed forces, as shown by the person's federal  
24.5 form DD-214 or other official documentation to the satisfaction of the commissioner;

24.6 (3) except for benefits under this section, has no remaining military or veteran-related  
24.7 educational assistance benefits for which the person may have been entitled; and

24.8 (4) while using the educational assistance authorized in this section, remains a resident  
24.9 student as defined in section 136A.101, subdivision 8.

24.10 (h) "Satisfactory academic progress" has the meaning given in section 136A.101,  
24.11 subdivision 10.

24.12 (i) "Student" has the meaning given in section 136A.101, subdivision 7.

24.13 (j) "Veteran" has the meaning given in section 197.447.

24.14 Sec. 12. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.791, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

24.15 Subd. 4. **Eligibility.** (a) A person is eligible for educational assistance under subdivision  
24.16 5 if:

24.17 (1) the person is:

24.18 (i) a veteran who is serving or has served honorably in any branch or unit of the United  
24.19 States armed forces at any time;

24.20 (ii) a nonveteran who has served honorably for a total of five years or more cumulatively  
24.21 as a member of the Minnesota National Guard or any other active or reserve component of  
24.22 the United States armed forces, and any part of that service occurred on or after September  
24.23 11, 2001;

24.24 (iii) the surviving spouse or child of a person who has served in the military and who  
24.25 has died as a direct result of that military service, only if the surviving spouse or child is  
24.26 eligible to receive federal education benefits under United States Code, title 38, chapter 33,  
24.27 as amended, or United States Code, title 38, chapter 35, as amended, except that remarriage  
24.28 does not terminate a surviving spouse's eligibility; or

24.29 (iv) the spouse or child of a person who has served in the military at any time and who  
24.30 has a total and permanent service-connected disability as rated by the United States Veterans  
24.31 Administration, only if the spouse or child is eligible to receive federal education benefits



25.1 under United States Code, title 38, chapter 33, as amended, or United States Code, title 38,  
25.2 chapter 35, as amended; and

25.3 (2) the person receiving the educational assistance is a Minnesota resident, as defined  
25.4 in section 136A.101, subdivision 8; and

25.5 (3) the person receiving the educational assistance:

25.6 (i) is an undergraduate or graduate student at an eligible institution;

25.7 (ii) is maintaining satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution for students  
25.8 participating in federal Title IV programs;

25.9 (iii) is enrolled in an education program leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree at  
25.10 an eligible institution;

25.11 (iv) has applied for educational assistance under this section prior to the end of the  
25.12 academic term for which the assistance is being requested;

25.13 (v) is in compliance with child support payment requirements under section 136A.121,  
25.14 subdivision 2, clause (5); and

25.15 (vi) has completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

25.16 (b) A person's eligibility terminates when the person becomes eligible for benefits under  
25.17 section 135A.52.

25.18 (c) To determine eligibility, the commissioner may require official documentation,  
25.19 including the person's federal form DD-214 or other official military discharge papers;  
25.20 correspondence from the United States Veterans Administration; birth certificate; marriage  
25.21 certificate; proof of enrollment at an eligible institution; signed affidavits; proof of residency;  
25.22 proof of identity; or any other official documentation the commissioner considers necessary  
25.23 to determine eligibility.

25.24 (d) The commissioner may deny eligibility or terminate benefits under this section to  
25.25 any person who has not provided sufficient documentation to determine eligibility for the  
25.26 program. An applicant may appeal the commissioner's eligibility determination or termination  
25.27 of benefits in writing to the commissioner at any time. The commissioner must rule on any  
25.28 application or appeal within 30 days of receipt of all documentation that the commissioner  
25.29 requires. The decision of the commissioner regarding an appeal is final. However, an  
25.30 applicant whose appeal of an eligibility determination has been rejected by the commissioner  
25.31 may submit an additional appeal of that determination in writing to the commissioner at  
25.32 any time that the applicant is able to provide substantively significant additional information

26.1 regarding the applicant's eligibility for the program. An approval of an applicant's eligibility  
 26.2 by the commissioner following an appeal by the applicant is not retroactively effective for  
 26.3 more than one year or the semester of the person's original application, whichever is later.

26.4 (e) Upon receiving an application with insufficient documentation to determine eligibility,  
 26.5 the commissioner must notify the applicant within 30 days of receipt of the application that  
 26.6 the application is being suspended pending receipt by the commissioner of sufficient  
 26.7 documentation from the applicant to determine eligibility.

26.8 **Sec. 13. ADVISORY TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED; VETERANS OF SPECIAL**  
 26.9 **GUERRILLA UNITS AND IRREGULAR FORCES IN LAOS.**

26.10 Subdivision 1. Establishment; membership. (a) The commissioner of veterans affairs  
 26.11 must establish a Veterans of Special Guerilla Units and Irregular Forces in Laos Advisory  
 26.12 Task Force.

26.13 (b) The advisory task force must consist of the commissioner, or a designee, and the  
 26.14 following additional 12 members appointed by the commissioner, except as otherwise  
 26.15 provided:

26.16 (1) a representative of the Minnesota Commanders Task Force designated by the  
 26.17 Commanders Task Force;

26.18 (2) one member with direct experience in Military Assistance Command Vietnam Special  
 26.19 Forces operations during the dates established in Minnesota Statutes, section 197.448,  
 26.20 subdivision 1, clause (2);

26.21 (3) a United States armed forces veteran who served on active duty in Vietnam during  
 26.22 the Vietnam War;

26.23 (4) a Hmong American Minnesota resident who served in the United States armed forces;

26.24 (5) two veterans of a special guerilla unit or irregular forces in Laos;

26.25 (6) one member with expertise in the history of allied irregular and surrogate forces  
 26.26 during the dates established in Minnesota Statutes, section 197.448, subdivision 1, clause  
 26.27 (2);

26.28 (7) one member with direct experience in United States intelligence or special operations  
 26.29 in Southeast Asia during the dates established in Minnesota Statutes, section 197.448,  
 26.30 subdivision 1, clause (2); and

27.1 (8) four legislators, with one member each appointed by the speaker of the house of  
 27.2 representatives, the house Democratic-Farmer-Labor leader, the senate majority leader, and  
 27.3 the senate minority leader.

27.4 Subd. 2. **Duties; report.** (a) The task force must:

27.5 (1) establish criteria for determining which Minnesotans served in the special guerrilla  
 27.6 units or with irregular forces in Laos; and

27.7 (2) establish criteria and a protocol to determine which Minnesotans who served in the  
 27.8 special guerilla units or with irregular forces in Laos are deserving of the benefits of a  
 27.9 veteran under Minnesota law and which veterans benefits should be extended to these  
 27.10 Minnesotans.

27.11 (b) The task force must prepare a report to the legislature that includes the findings,  
 27.12 criteria, protocol, and recommendations required under paragraph (a). The commissioner  
 27.13 must deliver the report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative  
 27.14 committees with jurisdiction over veterans affairs policy and finance by February 15, 2026.

27.15 Subd. 3. **Administration; terms of membership.** The commissioner shall convene the  
 27.16 first meeting of the advisory task force by September 15, 2025, and provide staff support  
 27.17 to the advisory task force. Minnesota Statutes, section 15.059, subdivision 6, governs the  
 27.18 terms and removal of members of the advisory task force. Members of the task force serve  
 27.19 without compensation or per diem.

27.20 Subd. 4. **Expiration.** The task force expires February 15, 2026.

27.21 Sec. 14. **GOLD STAR AND BLUE STAR FAMILIES; MEMORIAL PLAQUE.**

27.22 Subdivision 1. **Purpose.** The state of Minnesota wishes to honor and recognize the  
 27.23 service and sacrifices of Gold Star and Blue Star families.

27.24 Subd. 2. **Memorial plaque.** The commissioner of administration shall place a memorial  
 27.25 plaque in the court of honor on State Capitol grounds to recognize the service and sacrifices  
 27.26 of Minnesota's Gold Star and Blue Star families. The process for determining design and  
 27.27 location of the Gold Star and Blue Star memorial will follow the Capitol Area Architectural  
 27.28 and Planning Board commemorative works rules under Minnesota Rules, part 2400.2703.  
 27.29 The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board shall select a design from the submitted  
 27.30 designs to use as a basis for final production. The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning  
 27.31 Board must include the commissioner of veterans affairs on the design review committee  
 27.32 established under Minnesota Rules, part 2400.2703. The memorial design must be furnished  
 27.33 by the person or group who submit the design at no cost to the state.

APPENDIX  
Article locations for s1959-4

ARTICLE 1	MILITARY AFFAIRS AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS.....	Page.Ln 1.15
ARTICLE 2	MILITARY AFFAIRS AND VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY.....	Page.Ln 16.21