

1.1 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT ON H. F. No. 1937

1.2 A bill for an act

1.3 relating to state government; establishing a budget for the Department of Military
1.4 Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs; modifying veterans bonus program
1.5 and Minnesota GI bill program provisions; requiring reports; appropriating money;
1.6 amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, sections 190.19, subdivision 2a; 197.236,
1.7 subdivision 9; 197.79, subdivisions 1, 2, by adding a subdivision; 197.791,
1.8 subdivisions 5, 6, 7; Laws 2021, First Special Session chapter 12, article 1, section
1.9 37, subdivision 2.

1.10 May 6, 2023

1.11 The Honorable Melissa Hortman
1.12 Speaker of the House of Representatives

1.13 The Honorable Bobby Joe Champion
1.14 President of the Senate

1.15 We, the undersigned conferees for H. F. No. 1937 report that we have agreed upon the
1.16 items in dispute and recommend as follows:

1.17 That the Senate recede from its amendments and that H. F. No. 1937 be further amended
1.18 as follows:

1.19 Delete everything after the enacting clause and insert:

1.20 **"ARTICLE 1**

1.21 **MILITARY AFFAIRS AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS**

1.22 Section 1. **APPROPRIATIONS.**

1.23 The sums shown in the columns marked "Appropriations" are appropriated to the agencies
1.24 and for the purposes specified in this article. The appropriations are from the general fund,
1.25 or another named fund, and are available for the fiscal years indicated for each purpose.

1.26 The figures "2024" and "2025" used in this article mean that the appropriations listed under
1.27 them are available for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, or June 30, 2025, respectively.

2.1 "The first year" is fiscal year 2024. "The second year" is fiscal year 2025. "The biennium"
 2.2 is fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

2.3 **APPROPRIATIONS**
 2.4 **Available for the Year**
 2.5 **Ending June 30**
 2.6 **2024** **2025**

2.7 **Sec. 2. MILITARY AFFAIRS**

2.8 **Subdivision 1. Total Appropriation** **\$ 61,020,000 \$ 29,357,000**

2.9 The amounts that may be spent for each
 2.10 purpose are specified in the following
 2.11 subdivisions. The base is \$26,724,000 in fiscal
 2.12 year 2026 and \$26,730,000 in fiscal year 2027
 2.13 and each fiscal year thereafter.

2.14 **Subd. 2. Maintenance of Training Facilities** **9,951,000** **10,064,000**

2.15 **Subd. 3. General Support** **36,755,000** **5,279,000**

2.16 The base for this appropriation is \$4,246,000
 2.17 in fiscal year 2026 and \$4,252,000 in fiscal
 2.18 year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter.

2.19 **(a) MN Cyber Coordination Cell (C3).**
 2.20 \$552,000 the first year and \$558,000 the
 2.21 second year are for administrative and payroll
 2.22 costs to create and operate a Cyber
 2.23 Coordination Cell in the Minnesota National
 2.24 Guard. The base for this appropriation is
 2.25 \$297,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$303,000 in
 2.26 fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter.

2.27 **(b) Army Combat Fitness Test Field House.**
 2.28 \$17,600,000 the first year is for predesign,
 2.29 design, construction, furnishing and equipping
 2.30 costs for an Army Combat Fitness Test Field
 2.31 House. This is a onetime appropriation and is
 2.32 available until June 30, 2027.

3.1 **(c) Minnesota Military Museum at Camp**
3.2 **Ripley.** \$14,055,000 the first year is for the
3.3 design and construction of the Minnesota
3.4 military museum at Camp Ripley. This
3.5 appropriation is in addition to the
3.6 appropriation made in Laws 2020, Fifth
3.7 Special Session chapter 3, article 1, section
3.8 14, subdivision 6, for the same purposes. This
3.9 is a onetime appropriation and is available
3.10 until June 30, 2027.

3.11 **(d) Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F).**
3.12 \$760,000 the first year and \$772,000 the
3.13 second year are for administrative and payroll
3.14 costs to create and operate Holistic Health and
3.15 Fitness (H2F) initiatives across the Minnesota
3.16 Army National Guard. This is a onetime
3.17 appropriation.

3.18 **Subd. 4. Enlistment Incentives** 13,614,000 13,614,000

3.19 The appropriations in this subdivision are
3.20 available until June 30, 2027. The base for this
3.21 appropriation is \$12,114,000 in fiscal year
3.22 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter.

3.23 If the amount for fiscal year 2024 is
3.24 insufficient, the amount for 2025 is available
3.25 in fiscal year 2024. Any unencumbered
3.26 balance does not cancel at the end of the first
3.27 year and is available for the second year.

3.28 **Subd. 5. Emergency Services** 700,000 400,000

3.29 **Sustain Domestic Operations**
3.30 **Communication Capabilities.** For ongoing
3.31 replacement of communications systems to
3.32 support domestic operations when ordered
3.33 into state service by the governor. The base

5.1 of veterans under Minnesota Statutes, section
5.2 197.231.

5.3 (d) **Minnesota GI Bill.** \$200,000 each year is
5.4 for the costs of administering the Minnesota
5.5 GI Bill postsecondary educational benefits,
5.6 on-the-job training, and apprenticeship
5.7 program under Minnesota Statutes, section
5.8 197.791.

5.9 (e) **Gold Star Program.** \$100,000 each year
5.10 is for administering the Gold Star Program for
5.11 surviving family members of deceased
5.12 veterans.

5.13 (f) **County Veterans Service Office.**
5.14 \$1,550,000 each year is for funding the
5.15 County Veterans Service Office grant program
5.16 under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.608.

5.17 (g) **Camp Bliss.** \$150,000 each year is for a
5.18 grant to Camp Bliss as provided under article
5.19 2, section 9.

5.20 (h) **Veterans on the Lake.** \$50,000 each year
5.21 is for a grant to Veterans on the Lake for
5.22 expenses related to retreats for veterans,
5.23 including therapy, transportation, and activities
5.24 customized for veterans. These are onetime
5.25 appropriations.

5.26 (i) **Veteran Resilience Project.** \$300,000 each
5.27 year is for a grant to the veteran resilience
5.28 project. Grant funds must be used to make eye
5.29 movement desensitization and reprocessing
5.30 therapy available to veterans, veterans'
5.31 spouses, current military service members,
5.32 and current military service members' spouses
5.33 who are suffering from posttraumatic stress
5.34 disorder and trauma. The base for this

6.1 appropriation is \$200,000 in fiscal year 2026
6.2 and each fiscal year thereafter.

6.3 The veteran resilience project must report to
6.4 the commissioner of veterans affairs and the
6.5 chairs and ranking minority members of the
6.6 legislative committees with jurisdiction over
6.7 veterans affairs policy and finance by January
6.8 15 of each year on the program. The report
6.9 must include an overview of the program's
6.10 budget, a detailed explanation of program
6.11 expenditures, the number of veterans and
6.12 service members served by the program, and
6.13 a list and explanation of the services provided
6.14 to program participants.

6.15 (j) **CORE Program.** \$1,225,000 each year is
6.16 for the Counseling and Case Management
6.17 Outreach Referral and Education (CORE)
6.18 program.

6.19 (k) **LinkVet Call Center.** \$369,000 each year
6.20 is for the operation of the state's LinkVet Call
6.21 Center.

6.22 (l) **Recently Separated Veterans Program.**
6.23 \$350,000 each year is for operation of the
6.24 recently separated veterans program. The
6.25 commissioner of veterans affairs may use
6.26 Department of Defense and other veteran data
6.27 that were provided with an appropriate
6.28 disclosure to assist with connecting veterans
6.29 to resources and new programming. The
6.30 commissioner may use money for personnel,
6.31 research, marketing, technology solutions, and
6.32 professional or technical contracts. The base
6.33 for this appropriation is \$300,000 in fiscal year
6.34 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter.

7.1 **(m) Homeless Veterans and SOAR**
7.2 **Program.** \$1,035,000 each year is to operate
7.3 the homeless veteran registry and homeless
7.4 programs and to assist veterans, former service
7.5 members, and veterans' and former service
7.6 members' dependents with obtaining federal
7.7 benefits through the Social Security
7.8 Administration. The commissioner of veterans
7.9 affairs may use money for personnel, training,
7.10 research, marketing, and professional or
7.11 technical contracts. The base for this
7.12 appropriation is \$1,344,000 in fiscal year 2026
7.13 and each fiscal year thereafter.

7.14 **(n) Minnesota Assistance Council for**
7.15 **Veterans.** \$7,865,000 the first year and
7.16 \$1,075,000 the second year are for grants to
7.17 the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
7.18 to provide assistance throughout Minnesota
7.19 to veterans and veterans' families who are
7.20 homeless or in danger of homelessness,
7.21 including assistance with:
7.22 (1) supportive services to maintain housing;
7.23 (2) employment;
7.24 (3) legal issues;
7.25 (4) housing and housing-related costs;
7.26 (5) transportation;
7.27 (6) the acquisition and creation of permanent
7.28 supportive housing; and
7.29 (7) property management of permanent
7.30 supportive housing.

7.31 Of these amounts, \$6,350,000 the first year is
7.32 for the establishment of permanent supportive
7.33 housing options for homeless veterans and

8.1 former service members. This is a onetime
8.2 appropriation and is available until June 30,
8.3 2026. \$440,000 the first year is for the direct
8.4 veteran assistance grant. This is a onetime
8.5 appropriation. Any unencumbered balance
8.6 remaining in this subdivision in the first year
8.7 for grants to the Minnesota Assistance Council
8.8 for Veterans does not cancel and is available
8.9 for the second year. Assistance authorized
8.10 under this paragraph must be provided only
8.11 to a veteran who has resided in Minnesota for
8.12 30 days prior to the veteran's application for
8.13 assistance and according to other guidelines
8.14 established by the commissioner. To avoid
8.15 duplication of services, the commissioner must
8.16 ensure that this assistance is coordinated with
8.17 all other available programs for veterans.

8.18 **(o) Veterans Bonus Program. \$15,000,000**
8.19 the first year is for service bonuses to
8.20 Post-9/11 Veterans and Gold Star families
8.21 under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.79. This
8.22 is a onetime appropriation and is available
8.23 until June 30, 2024.

8.24 **(p) Metro Meals on Wheels. \$540,000 each**
8.25 year is for a grant to Metro Meals on Wheels
8.26 to provide: (1) home-delivered meals to
8.27 veterans; and (2) technical, enrollment,
8.28 outreach, and volunteer recruitment assistance
8.29 to member programs. Metro Meals on Wheels
8.30 must report to the commissioner of veterans
8.31 affairs and the chairs and ranking minority
8.32 members of the legislative committees with
8.33 jurisdiction over veterans affairs policy and
8.34 finance by September 1 each year with a
8.35 detailed explanation of how the grant money

9.1 was used and the number of veterans and
9.2 service members served by the program. This
9.3 is a onetime appropriation.

9.4 **(q) Minnesota Military and Veterans**
9.5 **Museum.** \$225,000 the second year is for a
9.6 grant to the Minnesota Military and Veterans
9.7 Museum for museum staff to provide direct
9.8 services to veterans and their families. The
9.9 base for this appropriation is \$300,000 in fiscal
9.10 year 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter.

9.11 **(r) Every Third Saturday.** \$100,000 each
9.12 year is for a grant to Every Third Saturday to
9.13 provide veterans with emergency assistance
9.14 and internships. Every Third Saturday must
9.15 report to the commissioner of veterans affairs
9.16 and the chairs and ranking minority members
9.17 of the legislative committees with jurisdiction
9.18 over veterans affairs policy and finance no
9.19 later than September 1, 2024, and by
9.20 September 1 of each subsequent year. Each
9.21 report must include, at a minimum, a detailed
9.22 explanation of how the grant money was used
9.23 and the number of veterans served by the
9.24 program. These are onetime appropriations.

9.25 **(s) Veteran Homelessness Initiative.**
9.26 \$4,311,000 the first year and \$1,311,000 the
9.27 second year are for an initiative to prevent and
9.28 end veteran homelessness.

9.29 **(t) Veterans Campground Wastewater**
9.30 **System Upgrades.** \$744,000 the first year is
9.31 for one or more grants to the Veterans
9.32 Campground on Big Marine Lake, a 501(c)(3)
9.33 nonprofit organization, to design, engineer,
9.34 permit, and construct wastewater systems on
9.35 campground property to increase the capacity

10.1 of wastewater systems. This is a onetime
 10.2 appropriation.

10.3 Subd. 3. Veterans Health Care 90,025,000 100,797,000

10.4 (a) The base for this appropriation in fiscal
 10.5 year 2026 is \$93,387,000 and \$94,435,000 in
 10.6 fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter.

10.7 (b) \$88,885,000 the first year and \$99,847,000
 10.8 the second year may be transferred to a
 10.9 veterans homes special revenue account in the
 10.10 special revenue fund in the same manner as
 10.11 other receipts are deposited according to
 10.12 Minnesota Statutes, section 198.34, and are
 10.13 appropriated to the commissioner of veterans
 10.14 affairs for the operation of veterans homes
 10.15 facilities and programs. The base for this
 10.16 transfer is \$92,437,000 in fiscal year 2026 and
 10.17 \$93,485,000 in fiscal year 2027.

10.18 (c) The department shall seek opportunities to
 10.19 maximize federal reimbursements of
 10.20 Medicare-eligible expenses and provide annual
 10.21 reports to the commissioner of management
 10.22 and budget on the federal Medicare
 10.23 reimbursements that are received. Contingent
 10.24 upon future federal Medicare receipts,
 10.25 reductions to the veterans homes' general fund
 10.26 appropriation may be made.

10.27 (d) \$400,000 each year is for the department
 10.28 to staff Veteran Community Health Navigators
 10.29 in community-based hospitals.

10.30 (e) \$190,000 the first year is for the working
 10.31 group established under article 2, section 8.

11.1 Sec. 4. CANCELLATION; FISCAL YEAR 2023.

11.2 (a) \$3,000,000 of the fiscal year 2023 general fund appropriation under Laws 2021, First
11.3 Special Session chapter 12, article 1, section 37, subdivision 2, paragraph (i), is canceled
11.4 to the general fund by June 30, 2023.

11.5 (b) \$744,000 of the fiscal year 2023 general fund appropriation under Laws 2022, chapter
11.6 54, article 1, section 3, subdivision 2, paragraph (k), is canceled to the general fund by June
11.7 30, 2023.

11.8 EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment.

11.9 **ARTICLE 2**
11.10 **VETERANS AFFAIRS STATUTORY CHANGES**

11.11 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 197.79, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

11.12 Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** For purposes of this section, the following terms have the
11.13 meanings given them.

11.14 (a) "Applicant" means a veteran or a veteran's guardian, conservator, or personal
11.15 representative or a beneficiary or a beneficiary's guardian, conservator, or personal
11.16 representative who has filed an application with the commissioner for a bonus under this
11.17 section.

11.18 (b) "Application" means a request for a bonus payment by a veteran, a veteran's
11.19 beneficiary, or a veteran's guardian, conservator, or personal representative through
11.20 submission of written information on a form designed by the commissioner for this purpose.

11.21 (c) "Beneficiary" means in relation to a deceased veteran and in the order named:

11.22 (1) the surviving spouse, if not remarried;

11.23 (2) the children of the veteran, if there is no surviving spouse or the surviving spouse
11.24 has remarried;

11.25 (3) the veteran's surviving parent or parents;

11.26 (4) the veteran's surviving sibling or siblings; or

11.27 (5) the veteran's estate.

11.28 (d) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

11.29 (e) "Department" means the Department of Veterans Affairs.

12.1 (f) "Eligibility period for the bonus" means the period from September 11, 2001, to
12.2 August 30, 2021.

12.3 (g) "Guardian" or "conservator" means the legally appointed representative of a minor
12.4 or incapacitated beneficiary or veteran, the chief officer of a hospital or institution in which
12.5 the incapacitated veteran is placed if the officer is authorized to accept money for the benefit
12.6 of the minor or incapacitated veteran, the person determined by the commissioner to be the
12.7 person who is legally charged with the responsibility for the care of the minor or incapacitated
12.8 beneficiary or veteran, or the person determined by the commissioner to be the person who
12.9 has assumed the responsibility for the care of the minor or incapacitated beneficiary or
12.10 veteran.

12.11 (h) "Honorable service" means honorable federal service in the United States armed
12.12 forces, as evidenced by:

12.13 (1) an honorable discharge;

12.14 (2) a general discharge under honorable conditions;

12.15 (3) in the case of an officer, a certificate of honorable service; or

12.16 (4) in the case of an applicant who is currently serving in active duty in the United States
12.17 armed forces, a certificate from an appropriate service authority that the applicant's service
12.18 to date has been honorable.

12.19 (i) "Incapacitated person" means an individual who, for reasons other than being a minor,
12.20 lacks sufficient understanding or the capacity to make personal decisions and who is unable
12.21 to meet the individual's own personal needs for medical care, nutrition, clothing, shelter, or
12.22 safety even when assisted by appropriate technology or supported decision making.

12.23 (j) "Resident veteran" means a veteran who served in active duty in the United States
12.24 armed forces at any time during the eligibility period for the bonus, and who also:

12.25 (1) has been separated or discharged from the United States armed forces, ~~and whose~~
12.26 ~~home of record at the time of entry into active duty in the United States armed forces, as~~
12.27 ~~indicated on the person's form DD-214 or other documents the commissioner may authorize,~~
12.28 ~~is the state of Minnesota and who~~ resides in Minnesota at the time of application with the
12.29 intention of residing in the state and not for any temporary purpose. An applicant may verify
12.30 a residence address by presenting a valid state driver's license; a state identification card; a
12.31 voter registration card; a rent receipt; a statement by the landlord, apartment manager, or
12.32 homeowner verifying that the individual is residing at the address; or other form of
12.33 verification approved by the commissioner; or

13.1 (2) is currently serving in the United States armed forces, and has a certificate from an
13.2 appropriate service authority stating that the person: (i) served in active duty in the United
13.3 States armed forces at any time during the eligibility period for the bonus; and (ii) has
13.4 Minnesota listed as the veteran's home of record in the veteran's official military personnel
13.5 file.

13.6 (k) "Service connected" means caused by an injury or disease incurred or aggravated
13.7 while on active duty, as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

13.8 (l) "Veteran" has the meaning given in section 197.447 and does not include a member
13.9 of the National Guard or the reserve components of the United States armed forces ordered
13.10 to active duty for the sole purpose of training. Veteran also includes a person who is providing
13.11 honorable service on active duty in the United States armed forces and has not been separated
13.12 or discharged.

13.13 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 197.79, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

13.14 Subd. 2. **Bonus amount.** (a) For a resident veteran who provided honorable service in
13.15 the United States armed forces at any time during the eligibility period for the bonus, the
13.16 bonus amount is:

13.17 (1) \$600, if the veteran did not receive the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global
13.18 War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, ~~or~~ Afghanistan Campaign
13.19 Medal, or Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal during the eligibility period for the bonus;

13.20 (2) \$1200, if the veteran received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global War
13.21 on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, ~~or~~ Afghanistan Campaign Medal,
13.22 or Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal during the eligibility period for the bonus; or

13.23 (3) \$2,000, if the veteran was eligible for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global
13.24 War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, ~~or~~ Afghanistan Campaign
13.25 Medal, or Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal during the eligibility period for the bonus,
13.26 and died during that time period as a direct result of a service connected injury, disease, or
13.27 condition.

13.28 (b) In the case of a deceased veteran, the commissioner shall pay the bonus to the veteran's
13.29 beneficiary.

14.1 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 197.79, is amended by adding a subdivision to
14.2 read:

14.3 Subd. 11. **Reapplication allowed.** Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, an eligible
14.4 veteran who previously applied for a bonus under this section may reapply if the veteran
14.5 either was denied a bonus or is entitled to receive a larger bonus than was originally awarded
14.6 based on the amendments to this section contained in this act.

14.7 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

14.8 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 197.791, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

14.9 Subd. 5. **Educational assistance.** (a) On approval by the commissioner of eligibility
14.10 for the program, the applicant shall be awarded, on a funds-available basis, the educational
14.11 assistance under the program for use at any time according to program rules at any eligible
14.12 institution.

14.13 (b) The amount of educational assistance in any semester or term for an eligible person
14.14 must be determined by subtracting from the eligible person's cost of attendance the amount
14.15 the person received or was eligible to receive in that semester or term from:

14.16 (1) the federal Pell Grant;

14.17 (2) the state grant program under section 136A.121; and

14.18 (3) any federal military or veterans educational benefits including but not limited to the
14.19 Montgomery GI Bill, GI Bill Kicker, the federal tuition assistance program, vocational
14.20 rehabilitation benefits, and any other federal benefits associated with the person's status as
14.21 a veteran, except veterans disability payments from the United States Department of Veterans
14.22 Affairs.

14.23 (c) The amount of educational assistance for any eligible person who is a ~~full-time~~
14.24 student must not exceed the following:

14.25 (1) ~~\$3,000~~ \$5,000 per state fiscal year; and

14.26 (2) ~~\$10,000~~ \$15,000 in a lifetime.

14.27 ~~(d) For a part-time student, the amount of educational assistance must not exceed \$500~~
14.28 ~~per semester or term of enrollment. For the purpose of this paragraph, a part-time~~
14.29 ~~undergraduate student is a student taking fewer than 12 credits or the equivalent for a~~
14.30 ~~semester or term of enrollment and a part-time graduate student is a student considered part~~
14.31 ~~time by the eligible institution the graduate student is attending. The minimum award for~~
14.32 ~~undergraduate and graduate students is \$50 per term.~~

15.1 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 197.791, subdivision 6, is amended to read:

15.2 Subd. 6. **Apprenticeship and on-the-job training.** (a) The commissioner, in consultation
15.3 with the commissioners of employment and economic development and labor and industry,
15.4 shall develop and implement an apprenticeship and on-the-job training program to administer
15.5 a portion of the Minnesota GI Bill program to pay benefit amounts to eligible persons, as
15.6 provided in this subdivision.

15.7 (b) An "eligible employer" means an employer operating a qualifying apprenticeship or
15.8 on-the-job training program that has been approved by the commissioner.

15.9 (c) A person is eligible for apprenticeship and on-the-job training assistance under this
15.10 subdivision if the person is:

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

15.13 (2) a nonveteran who has served honorably for a total of five years or more cumulatively
15.14 as a member of the Minnesota National Guard or any other active or reserve component of
15.15 the United States armed forces, and any part of that service occurred on or after September
15.16 11, 2001;

15.17 (3) the surviving spouse or child of a person who has served in the military and who has
15.18 died as a direct result of that military service, only if the surviving spouse or child is eligible
15.19 to receive federal education benefits under United States Code, title 38, chapter 33, as
15.20 amended, or United States Code, title 38, chapter 35, as amended; or

15.21 (4) the spouse or child of a person who has served in the military at any time and who
15.22 has a total and permanent service-connected disability as rated by the United States Veterans
15.23 Administration, only if the spouse or child is eligible to receive federal education benefits
15.24 under United States Code, title 38, chapter 33, as amended, or United States Code, title 38,
15.25 chapter 35, as amended.

15.26 (d) The amount of assistance paid to or on behalf of an eligible individual under this
15.27 subdivision must not exceed the following:

15.28 (1) \$3,000 per fiscal year for apprenticeship expenses;

15.29 (2) \$3,000 per fiscal year for on-the-job training;

15.30 (3) \$1,000 for a job placement credit payable to an eligible employer upon hiring and
15.31 completion of six consecutive months' employment of a person receiving assistance under
15.32 this subdivision; and

16.1 (4) \$1,000 for a job placement credit payable to an eligible employer after a person
16.2 receiving assistance under this subdivision has been employed by the eligible employer for
16.3 at least 12 consecutive months as a full-time employee.

16.4 (e) No more than \$5,000 in aggregate benefits under this subdivision may be paid to or
16.5 on behalf of an individual in one fiscal year.

16.6 (f) If an eligible person receives benefits under subdivision 5 or 5b, the eligible person's
16.7 aggregate benefits under this subdivision and subdivisions 5 and 5b must not exceed ~~\$10,000~~
16.8 \$15,000 in the eligible person's lifetime.

16.9 (g) Assistance for apprenticeship expenses and on-the-job training is available for
16.10 qualifying programs, which must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:

16.11 (1) the training must be with an eligible employer;

16.12 (2) the training must be documented and reported;

16.13 (3) the training must reasonably be expected to lead to an entry-level position; and

16.14 (4) the position must require at least six months of training to become fully trained.

16.15 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 197.791, subdivision 7, is amended to read:

16.16 Subd. 7. **Additional professional or educational benefits.** (a) The commissioner shall
16.17 develop and implement a program to administer a portion of the Minnesota GI Bill program
16.18 to pay additional benefit amounts to eligible persons as provided under this subdivision.

16.19 (b) A person is eligible for additional benefits under this subdivision if the person is:

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

16.22 (2) a nonveteran who has served honorably for a total of five years or more cumulatively
16.23 as a member of the Minnesota National Guard or any other active or reserve component of
16.24 the United States armed forces, and any part of that service occurred on or after September
16.25 11, 2001;

16.26 (3) the surviving spouse or child of a person who has served in the military and who has
16.27 died as a direct result of that military service, only if the surviving spouse or child is eligible
16.28 to receive federal education benefits under United States Code, title 38, chapter 33, as
16.29 amended, or United States Code, title 38, chapter 35, as amended; or

16.30 (4) the spouse or child of a person who has served in the military at any time and who
16.31 has a total and permanent service-connected disability as rated by the United States Veterans

17.1 Administration, only if the spouse or child is eligible to receive federal education benefits
17.2 under United States Code, title 38, chapter 33, as amended, or United States Code, title 38,
17.3 chapter 35, as amended.

17.4 (c) The amount of assistance paid to or on behalf of an eligible individual under this
17.5 subdivision must not exceed the following amounts:

17.6 (1) \$3,000 per state fiscal year; and

17.7 (2) ~~\$10,000~~ \$15,000 in a lifetime.

17.8 (d) If an eligible person receives benefits under subdivision 5 or 5a, the eligible person's
17.9 aggregate benefits under this subdivision and subdivisions 5 and 5a must not exceed ~~\$10,000~~
17.10 \$15,000 in the eligible person's lifetime.

17.11 (e) A person eligible under this subdivision may use the benefit amounts for the following
17.12 purposes:

17.13 (1) licensing or certification tests, the successful completion of which demonstrates an
17.14 individual's possession of the knowledge or skill required to enter into, maintain, or advance
17.15 in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession, provided that the
17.16 tests and the licensing or credentialing organizations or entities that offer the tests are
17.17 approved by the commissioner;

17.18 (2) tests for admission to institutions of higher learning or graduate schools;

17.19 (3) national tests providing an opportunity for course credit at institutions of higher
17.20 learning;

17.21 (4) a preparatory course for a test that is required or used for admission to an institution
17.22 of higher education or a graduate program; and

17.23 (5) any fee associated with the pursuit of a professional or educational objective specified
17.24 in clauses (1) to (4).

17.25 Sec. 7. Laws 2021, First Special Session chapter 12, article 1, section 37, subdivision 2,
17.26 is amended to read:

17.27 Subd. 2. **Veterans Programs and Services** 27,073,000 22,153,000

17.28 (a) **CORE Program.** \$750,000 each year is
17.29 for the Counseling and Case Management
17.30 Outreach Referral and Education (CORE)
17.31 program.

18.1 **(b) Veterans Service Organizations.**

18.2 \$353,000 each year is for grants to the
18.3 following congressionally chartered veterans
18.4 service organizations as designated by the
18.5 commissioner: Disabled American Veterans,
18.6 Military Order of the Purple Heart, the
18.7 American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars,
18.8 Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, and
18.9 Paralyzed Veterans of America. This funding
18.10 must be allocated in direct proportion to the
18.11 funding currently being provided by the
18.12 commissioner to these organizations.

18.13 **(c) Minnesota Assistance Council for**

18.14 **Veterans.** \$750,000 each year is for a grant
18.15 to the Minnesota Assistance Council for
18.16 Veterans to provide assistance throughout
18.17 Minnesota to veterans and their families who
18.18 are homeless or in danger of homelessness,
18.19 including assistance with the following:

18.20 (1) utilities;

18.21 (2) employment; and

18.22 (3) legal issues.

18.23 The assistance authorized under this paragraph
18.24 must be made only to veterans who have
18.25 resided in Minnesota for 30 days prior to
18.26 application for assistance and according to
18.27 other guidelines established by the
18.28 commissioner. In order to avoid duplication
18.29 of services, the commissioner must ensure that
18.30 this assistance is coordinated with all other
18.31 available programs for veterans.

18.32 **(d) State's Veterans Cemeteries.** \$6,172,000
18.33 the first year and \$1,672,000 the second year
18.34 are for the state's veterans cemeteries. Of these

19.1 amounts, \$4,500,000 the first year is to
19.2 construct and equip the new veterans cemetery
19.3 in Redwood Falls.

19.4 **(e) Honor Guards.** \$200,000 each year is for
19.5 compensation for honor guards at the funerals
19.6 of veterans under Minnesota Statutes, section
19.7 197.231.

19.8 **(f) Minnesota GI Bill.** \$200,000 each year is
19.9 for the costs of administering the Minnesota
19.10 GI Bill postsecondary educational benefits,
19.11 on-the-job training, and apprenticeship
19.12 program under Minnesota Statutes, section
19.13 197.791.

19.14 **(g) Gold Star Program.** \$100,000 each year
19.15 is for administering the Gold Star Program for
19.16 surviving family members of deceased
19.17 veterans.

19.18 **(h) County Veterans Service Office.**
19.19 \$1,100,000 each year is for funding the
19.20 County Veterans Service Office grant program
19.21 under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.608.

19.22 **(i) Veteran Homelessness Initiative.**
19.23 \$3,165,000 each year is for an initiative to
19.24 prevent and end veteran homelessness. The
19.25 commissioner of veterans affairs may provide
19.26 housing vouchers and other services to
19.27 alleviate homelessness among veterans and
19.28 former service members in Minnesota. The
19.29 commissioner may contract for program
19.30 administration and may establish a vacancy
19.31 reserve fund. The base for this appropriation
19.32 in fiscal year 2024 and each year thereafter is
19.33 \$1,311,000.

20.1 (j) **Camp Bliss.** \$75,000 each year is for a
20.2 grant to Independent Lifestyles, Inc. for
20.3 expenses related to retreats for veterans at
20.4 Camp Bliss in Walker, Minnesota, including
20.5 therapy, transportation, and activities
20.6 customized for veterans.

20.7 (k) **Veterans On The Lake.** \$50,000 in the
20.8 first year is for a grant to Veterans on the Lake
20.9 for expenses related to retreats for veterans,
20.10 including therapy, transportation, and activities
20.11 customized for veterans.

20.12 (l) **Veterans Resilience Project.** \$400,000
20.13 each year is for a grant to the veterans
20.14 resilience project. Grant funds must be used
20.15 to make eye movement desensitization and
20.16 reprocessing therapy available to veterans ~~and,~~
20.17 veterans' spouses, current military service
20.18 members, and current military service
20.19 members' spouses who are suffering from
20.20 posttraumatic stress disorder and trauma. The
20.21 base for this appropriation in fiscal year 2024
20.22 and each year thereafter is \$200,000.

20.23 The veterans resilience project must report to
20.24 the commissioner of veterans affairs and the
20.25 chairs and ranking minority members of the
20.26 legislative committees with jurisdiction over
20.27 veterans affairs policy and finance by January
20.28 15 of each year on the program. The report
20.29 must include an overview of the program's
20.30 budget, a detailed explanation of program
20.31 expenditures, the number of veterans and
20.32 service members served by the program, and
20.33 a list and explanation of the services provided
20.34 to program participants.

21.1 (m) **9/11 Task Force.** \$500,000 the first year
21.2 is for the Advisory Task Force on 9/11 and
21.3 Global War on Terrorism Remembrance. The
21.4 task force must collect, memorialize, and
21.5 publish stories of Minnesotans' service in the
21.6 Global War on Terrorism and impacts on their
21.7 dependents. The task force must host a
21.8 remembrance program in September 2021.
21.9 This is a onetime appropriation.

21.10 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

21.11 **Sec. 8. VETERAN DOMICILIARY RESIDENT QUALITY OF CARE WORKING**
21.12 **GROUP.**

21.13 Subdivision 1. **Creation.** The veteran domiciliary resident quality of care working group
21.14 consists of the following members:

21.15 (1) commissioners of the following agencies or the commissioners' designees:

21.16 (i) the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

21.17 (ii) the Department of Health;

21.18 (2) two Department of Veterans Affairs staff with expertise in veterans homes, appointed
21.19 by the commissioner of veterans affairs;

21.20 (3) two Department of Health staff with expertise in boarding care homes, domiciliary
21.21 settings, assisted living, and related standards of care, appointed by the commissioner of
21.22 health;

21.23 (4) five medical professionals, including a medical doctor, a nurse, a mental health
21.24 professional, and two other health care professionals, with expertise in veterans' health care,
21.25 appointed by the governor;

21.26 (5) up to three past or current domiciliary staff with experience caring for residents
21.27 appointed by the governor; and

21.28 (6) four public members who have an interest in veterans affairs, including two public
21.29 members appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and two public members
21.30 appointed by the majority leader of the senate.

21.31 Subd. 2. **Duties.** The working group shall meet on a regular basis and the first meeting
21.32 must be no later than 45 days after the effective date of this section. The working group

22.1 shall review and analyze the acuity of domiciliary residents and the current care model,
22.2 including admission, care plans, and day-to-day care, and the current staffing structure and
22.3 ratios. The working group shall provide recommendations on:

22.4 (1) staffing levels that are necessary to properly care for residents based on the residents'
22.5 range of acuity;

22.6 (2) a care delivery model that focuses on appropriate and adequate care for residents;

22.7 (3) additional and ongoing training for domiciliary staff;

22.8 (4) a sufficient management structure to ensure support and provide guidance to staff;

22.9 and

22.10 (5) outcomes to determine if staffing levels and care delivery are appropriate or if, based
22.11 on the outcomes, adjustments are necessary.

22.12 The working group shall provide information and recommendations to the legislature by
22.13 January 15, 2024, that the legislature can use to make decisions and effectuate change to
22.14 ensure that the standard of care and staffing levels are sufficient for different resident acuity
22.15 levels in the domiciliary.

22.16 Subd. 3. **Administrative provisions.** (a) The commissioner of veterans affairs or the
22.17 commissioner's designee must convene the initial meeting of the working group. Upon the
22.18 request of the working group, the commissioner must provide meeting space and
22.19 administrative services for the group. The members of the working group must elect a chair
22.20 or cochair from the members of the working group at the initial meeting.

22.21 (b) Public members of the working group serve without compensation or payment of
22.22 expenses.

22.23 (c) The working group expires January 15, 2024, or upon submission of the report
22.24 required under subdivision 2, whichever is earlier.

22.25 (d) The working group may accept gifts and grants that are accepted on behalf of the
22.26 state and constitute donations to the state. Money received under this paragraph is
22.27 appropriated to the commissioner of veterans affairs for the purposes of the working group.

22.28 Subd. 4. **Deadline for appointments and designations.** The appointments and
22.29 designations authorized by this section must be completed by August 1, 2023.

23.1 Sec. 9. CAMP BLISS GRANT PROGRAM.

23.2 Subdivision 1. Grant program; eligibility; reimbursement requirements. (a) The
23.3 commissioner of veterans affairs shall issue a grant to Independent Lifestyles, Inc., for
23.4 expenses related to retreats for eligible veterans and the veterans' family members at Camp
23.5 Bliss in the city of Walker.

23.6 (b) The grant recipient may use grant money to provide therapy, transportation, and
23.7 activities customized for eligible veterans and the veterans' family members.

23.8 (c) The commissioner must reimburse the grant recipient at least \$850 for each eligible
23.9 veteran or family member who the commissioner verifies attended the camp and received
23.10 services from the grant recipient. The commissioner shall disburse money to the grant
23.11 recipient for up to two visits per year to the camp for each eligible veteran or family member.

23.12 Subd. 2. Definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the
23.13 meanings given.

23.14 (b) "Eligible veteran" means a Minnesota resident who is either:

23.15 (1) a former armed forces service member who has a DD-214 or other official document
23.16 from the official military personnel file of the veteran that describes the honorable service
23.17 of the veteran; or

23.18 (2) a current armed forces member, whether serving in the active or reserve component
23.19 of the armed forces.

23.20 (c) "Family member" means an eligible veteran's spouse, domestic partner, and children.

23.21 Sec. 10. VETERANS HOMES COST OF CARE CALCULATION.

23.22 Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 198.03, subdivision 2, and Minnesota
23.23 Rules, part 9050.0500, the commissioner of veterans affairs is not required to perform the
23.24 annual calculation of the cost of care for veterans homes in Montevideo, Preston, and Bemidji
23.25 in fiscal years 2024 and 2025. In fiscal years 2024 and 2025, the commissioner must calculate
23.26 the average daily cost of care per resident by averaging the cost of care of veterans homes
23.27 in Luverne and Fergus Falls. The commissioner must only use this method of calculating
23.28 the cost of care of veterans homes in fiscal years 2024 and 2025. This section expires on
23.29 June 30, 2025."

23.30 Delete the title and insert:

24.1 "A bill for an act
24.2 relating to state government; establishing a budget for the Department of Military
24.3 Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs; modifying veterans bonus program
24.4 and Minnesota GI bill program provisions; establishing the veteran domiciliary
24.5 resident quality of care working group; requiring reports; appropriating money;
24.6 amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, sections 197.79, subdivisions 1, 2, by adding
24.7 a subdivision; 197.791, subdivisions 5, 6, 7; Laws 2021, First Special Session
24.8 chapter 12, article 1, section 37, subdivision 2."

25.1 We request the adoption of this report and repassage of the bill.

25.2 House Conferees:

25.3

25.4 Jerry Newton Steve Elkins

25.5

25.6 Matt Bliss

25.7 Senate Conferees:

25.8

25.9 Nicole Mitchell Erin Murphy

25.10

25.11 Bruce Anderson