CHAPTER 38--H.F.No. 1937

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

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

ARTICLE 1

MILITARY AFFAIRS AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS

Section 1. **APPROPRIATIONS.**

The sums shown in the columns marked "Appropriations" are appropriated to the agencies and for the purposes specified in this article. The appropriations are from the general fund, or another named fund, and are available for the fiscal years indicated for each purpose. The figures "2024" and "2025" used in this article mean that the appropriations listed under them are available for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, or June 30, 2025, respectively. "The first year" is fiscal year 2024. "The second year" is fiscal year 2025. "The biennium" is fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

	APPROPRIATIONS Available for the Year Ending June 30	
	2024	**2025**
Sec. 2. **MILITARY AFFAIRS**		
Subdivision 1. **Total Appropriation**	**$ 61,020,000**	**$ 29,357,000**

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

Subd. 2. **Maintenance of Training Facilities**	9,951,000	10,064,000
Subd. 3. **General Support**	36,755,000	5,279,000

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the amount for fiscal year 2024 is insufficient, the amount for 2025 is available in fiscal year 2024. Any

unencumbered balance does not cancel at the end of the first year and is available for the second year.

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

Sustain Domestic Operations Communication Capabilities. For ongoing replacement of communications systems to support domestic operations when ordered into state service by the governor. The base for this appropriation is $300,000 in fiscal year 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter.

Sec. 3. **VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Subdivision 1. **Total Appropriation**	**$ 146,548,000**	**$ 132,011,000**

The amounts that may be spent for each purpose are specified in the following subdivisions. The base is $123,645,000 in fiscal year 2026 and $124,693,000 in fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter.

Subd. 2. **Veterans Programs and Services**	56,523,000	31,214,000

The amounts that may be spent for each purpose are specified in the following subdivisions. The base is $30,258,000 in fiscal year 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(n) **Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans.** $7,865,000 the first year and $1,075,000 the second year are for grants to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans to provide assistance throughout Minnesota to veterans and veterans' families who are homeless or in danger of homelessness, including assistance with:

(1) supportive services to maintain housing;

(2) employment;

(3) legal issues;

(4) housing and housing-related costs;

(5) transportation;

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

(7) property management of permanent supportive housing.

Of these amounts, $6,350,000 the first year is for the establishment of permanent supportive housing options for homeless veterans and former service members. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until June 30, 2026. $440,000 the first year is for the direct veteran assistance grant. This is a onetime appropriation. Any unencumbered balance remaining in this subdivision in the first year for grants to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans does not cancel and is available for the second year. Assistance authorized under this paragraph must be provided only to a veteran who has resided in Minnesota for 30 days prior to the veteran's application for assistance and according to other guidelines established by the commissioner. To avoid duplication of services, the commissioner must ensure that this assistance is coordinated with all other available programs for veterans.

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

(p) **Metro Meals on Wheels.** $540,000 each year is for a grant to Metro Meals on Wheels to provide: (1) home-delivered meals to veterans; and (2) technical, enrollment, outreach, and volunteer recruitment assistance to member programs. Metro Meals on Wheels must report to the commissioner of veterans affairs and the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over veterans affairs policy and finance by September 1 each year with a detailed explanation of how the grant money was used and the number of veterans and service members served by the program. This is a onetime appropriation.

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

(r) **Every Third Saturday.** $100,000 each year is for a grant to Every Third Saturday to provide veterans with emergency assistance and internships. Every Third

Saturday must report to the commissioner of veterans affairs and the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over veterans affairs policy and finance no later than September 1, 2024, and by September 1 of each subsequent year. Each report must include, at a minimum, a detailed explanation of how the grant money was used and the number of veterans served by the program. These are onetime appropriations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sec. 4. **CANCELLATION; FISCAL YEAR 2023.**

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

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

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

ARTICLE 2

VETERANS AFFAIRS STATUTORY CHANGES

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

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

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

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

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

(1) the surviving spouse, if not remarried;

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

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

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

(5) the veteran's estate.

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

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

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

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

to be the person who has assumed the responsibility for the care of the minor or incapacitated beneficiary or veteran.

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

(1) an honorable discharge;

(2) a general discharge under honorable conditions;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(1) the federal Pell Grant;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) the training must be documented and reported;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(b) **Veterans Service Organizations.** $353,000 each year is for grants to the following congressionally chartered veterans service organizations as designated by the commissioner: Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, and Paralyzed Veterans of America. This funding must be allocated in direct proportion to the funding currently being provided by the commissioner to these organizations.

(c) **Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans.** $750,000 each year is for a grant to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans to provide assistance throughout Minnesota to veterans and their families who are homeless or in danger of homelessness, including assistance with the following:

(1) utilities;

(2) employment; and

(3) legal issues.

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

(d) **State's Veterans Cemeteries.** $6,172,000 the first year and $1,672,000 the second year are for the state's veterans cemeteries. Of these amounts, $4,500,000 the

first year is to construct and equip the new veterans cemetery in Redwood Falls.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(l) **Veterans Resilience Project.** $400,000 each year is for a grant to the veterans resilience project. Grant funds must be used to make eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy available to veterans ~~and~~, veterans' spouses, current military service members, and current military service members' spouses who are suffering from posttraumatic stress

disorder and trauma. The base for this appropriation in fiscal year 2024 and each year thereafter is $200,000.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(i) the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(ii) the Department of Health;

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

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

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

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

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

Subd. 2. **Duties.** The working group shall meet on a regular basis and the first meeting must be no later than 45 days after the effective date of this section. The working group shall review and analyze the acuity of domiciliary residents and the current care model, including admission, care plans, and day-to-day care, and the current staffing structure and ratios. The working group shall provide recommendations on:

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

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

(3) additional and ongoing training for domiciliary staff;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sec. 9. **CAMP BLISS GRANT PROGRAM.**

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

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

(c) The commissioner must reimburse the grant recipient at least $850 for each eligible veteran or family member who the commissioner verifies attended the camp and received services from the grant recipient.

The commissioner shall disburse money to the grant recipient for up to two visits per year to the camp for each eligible veteran or family member.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Presented to the governor May 15, 2023