

197.448 VETERAN OF THE SECRET WAR IN LAOS.

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

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

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

Subd. 2. **Eligibility for benefits and privileges.** (a) A veteran of the Secret War in Laos, as defined in subdivision 1, clause (1), is entitled to the benefits and privileges listed in paragraph (d) on July 2, 2025.

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

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

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

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

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

History: 2025 c 30 art 2 s 9