

1 State of Arkansas
2 92nd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2019
4
5 By: Senator T. Garner
6

A Bill

SENATE BILL

For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE
9 ON VETERANS AFFAIRS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

12 TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK
13 FORCE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS.

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17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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19 SECTION 1. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. Arkansas Legislative
20 Task Force on Veterans Affairs – Creation – Membership – Duties.

21 (a) There is created the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Veterans
22 Affairs.

23 (b)(1) The task force shall consist of the following twenty-eight (28)
24 members of the General Assembly:

25 (A) The President Pro Tempore of the Senate, or his or her
26 designee who is a member of the Senate;

27 (B) A member of the Senate to serve as Senate cochair of
28 the task force, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

29 (C) Six (6) members of the Senate appointed by the Senate
30 cochair of the task force;

31 (D) The Speaker of the House of Representatives, or his or
32 her designee who is a member of the House of Representatives;

33 (E) A member of the House of Representatives to serve as
34 House of Representatives cochair of the task force, appointed by the Speaker
35 of the House of Representatives; and

36 (F) Eighteen (18) members of the House of Representatives,



1 appointed by the House of Representatives cochair of the task force.

2 (2) If a vacancy occurs on the task force, the vacancy shall be
3 filled by the same process as the original appointment.

4 (3) The members of the task force shall be paid per diem and
5 mileage as authorized by law for attendance at meetings of interim committees
6 of the General Assembly.

7 (c)(1) The cochairs shall call the first meeting of the task force
8 within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this act.

9 (2) In order to interact directly with veterans throughout the
10 State of Arkansas, the task force may hold meetings at various sites
11 throughout the state.

12 (3) Meetings of the task force shall be held at least one (1)
13 time every three (3) months but may occur more often at the call of the
14 cochairs.

15 (4) The task force shall establish rules and procedures for
16 conducting its business.

17 (5)(A) A majority of the members of the task force shall
18 constitute a quorum for transacting business of the task force.

19 (B) An affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum present
20 is required for the passage of a motion or other task force action.

21 (6) The Bureau of Legislative Research shall provide staff for
22 the task force.

23 (d)(1) The purpose of the task force is to conduct a study of
24 veterans' issues within the State of Arkansas, including without limitation a
25 study regarding the occurrence of suicide among the veteran population in
26 this state.

27 (2) In carrying out its purpose, the task force shall:

28 (A) Study risk factors for suicide in veterans;

29 (B) Review and research options for preventing or reducing
30 the occurrence of suicide among the veteran population in the state;

31 (C) Examine mental health care available to veterans
32 within the state;

33 (D) Conduct at least one (1) town-hall-style meeting to
34 hear from veterans in the state and their concerns regarding mental health
35 care and other issues affecting veterans in the state;

36 (E) Engage the following:

1 (i) The Department of Veterans Affairs;
2 (ii) The Department of Health; and
3 (iii) Mental health professionals licensed to
4 practice in this state;

5 (F) Review best practices among other states;

6 (G) Review methods to create a statewide program targeting
7 suicide prevention and preventative mental health care for veterans; and

8 (H) Study and review other issues that the task force
9 deems relevant to improving the productivity and wellness of veterans
10 residing in this state.

11 (e) The task force may establish an advisory board to assist the task
12 force in accomplishing its purposes as stated in this act. If the task force
13 determines that creation of an advisory board would be beneficial, it shall
14 adopt rules regarding the membership and duties of the advisory board.

15 (f) The task force shall file with the Governor, the Speaker of the
16 House of Representatives, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate a final
17 written report on or before December 1, 2020.

18 (g) The task force shall expire on December 31, 2020.

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