



2026 HF 3544 (Repinski)

Housekeeping and Federal Conformity

WHAT DOES THIS BILL DO?

This bill allows for the re-classification of the current Chief of Staff position into Deputy Commissioner of Administration.

This statutory change will allow for the reclassification of the current Chief of Staff position into the position of Deputy Commissioner for Administration and maintains the requirement that the incumbent of any Deputy Commissioner position at the agency be a Minnesota resident and Armed Forces Veteran.

This is not the creation of a new position, but a title change that aligns the MDVA with other agencies of similar size and ensures parity among division leaders, strengthening organizational clarity and authority.

The Deputy Commissioner of Administration would provide clearer operational leadership and stronger support to the Commissioner as MDVA navigates increasingly complex healthcare and program and services delivery challenges.

Additionally, the bill repeals outdated sections of agency statutes including:

- **196.19 to 196.26** otherwise known as the “Environmental Hazards Information and Assistance Act.” This was passed in the early 1980s as Minnesota grappled with the devastating effects of Agent Orange and other chemical agents in our Veteran population. In the more than 40 years since this became state law, there have been numerous Federal legislations recognizing chemical agent impact on servicemembers and illnesses relating to them are now widely recognized carcinogenic presumptive conditions by the Federal VA.
- **197.225** which requires the department to collect and maintain data about Minnesota residents who died from service-connected causes, something the department has never been able to effectuate due to the Department of Defense not allowing for the sharing of this information.

WHY IS THIS BILL IMPORTANT?

This title and structural modernization will better reflect responsibilities of the position that leads MDVA’s Central Office Division and preserves the Veteran-deputy requirement.

This bill cleans up outdated statutes and ensures that MDVA funds and programs are channeled towards eligible individuals who have not forfeited their rights to federal benefits under US Code 38, Chapter 61. By aligning state benefits, services and programs with federal forfeiture determinations, this portion of the bill ensures a more consistent and fair distribution of resources in a tight fiscal environment.

HOW WILL MINNESOTANS BE BETTER OFF IF WE PASS THIS BILL?

Minnesota Veterans and their families will benefit from the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs having a modernized leadership team that is comparable to other state agencies of this size and mission complexity. Furthermore, periodic updates to outdated state law allows for a clearer reading of MDVA statutes for the state Veteran population, including spouses and dependents. Finally, the federal conformity portion will ensure that benefits and programs continue to be available solely for those who have not forfeited their rights to the benefits.

MINNESOTA VETERANS STATE BILL TRACKER

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs offers a state bill tracker. This trackers follows bills of interest to Veterans that have been introduced in the Minnesota Legislature.

Veiv the online bill tracker at mn.gov/mdva/news/legislative-updates/state-bill-tracker/



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