

Chapter 96

2026 Regular Session

Subject Veterans policy bill

Bill H.F. 3522

Analyst Jeff Diebel

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Overview

This act contains a variety of policy provisions related to veterans. Notably, the act incorporates the recommendations from the legislatively created working group on benefits for veterans of the Secret War in Laos.

Summary

Section	Description
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| 1 | <p>Veteran designation.</p> <p>Directs the commissioner of public safety to designate on state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards that the holder is a veteran of the Secret War in Laos (SGU veteran). Effective January 1, 2027.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Officers and enlisted members.</p> <p>Ties the minimum pay rate that National Guard members are entitled to receive while on active service to the base pay rate set by the federal government for an E-5 (Sergeant) service member.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Requirements for legislatively directed competitive and direct grants.</p> <p>Subd. 1. Definitions. Defines "active service member," "commissioner," "dependent child," "immediate family member," and "veteran" for purposes of this section.</p> <p>Subd. 2. Grantee eligibility. Establishes the following eligibility criteria to receive a grant covered under this section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Minnesota nonprofit with at least five years of experience;▪ good standing with the attorney general; and▪ have a current federal tax form 990 on file with the IRS. <p>Subd. 3. Limitations on use of grant money. Restricts the use of grant money covered by this section to fund services for:</p> |

Section Description

- Minnesota veterans, active service members, and their immediate family members; and
- immediate family members of a deceased veteran who died in the line of duty.

Subd. 4. Grant application scoring system. Directs the commissioner to develop a grant application scoring system to evaluate grant applications.

Subd. 5. Grant amounts. Directs the commissioner to award grants based on the results of the grant application scoring system.

Subd. 6. Suspension of grant money. Establishes the grounds for the commissioner to justify suspending grant payments.

Subd. 7. Reports. Requires grant recipients to file an annual report with the commissioner.

Requires the commissioner, in turn, to submit an annual report to the legislature summarizing the reports that grant recipients submit under this subdivision.

Subd. 8. Administrative costs. Authorizes the commissioner to retain up to five percent of grant appropriations for administration.

Subd. 9. Interaction with other law. Provides that the grant administration requirements under this section are in addition to those required in chapter 16B.

4 Honor guards.

Authorizes the commissioner of veterans affairs to pay for honor guards for persons eligible to be buried in state veteran cemeteries in section 5.

5 State veteran cemetery burial eligibility.

Authorizes honorably discharged members of the National Guard or another reserve component of the armed forces and SGU veterans to be buried in a state veteran cemetery.

6 State veteran cemetery burial fees.

Requires those persons made eligible for state veteran cemetery burial under section 5 to pay a burial fee.

7 Definitions.

Defines terms used in the SGU veteran eligibility statute.

Section	Description
8	<p>Eligibility of benefits and privileges.</p> <p>Adds certain SGU veteran benefits and privileges and removes others from the statutory list created by the legislature in 2025.</p>
9	<p>Eligibility determination.</p> <p>Directs the commissioner to establish an application process for persons seeking SGU veteran status and provides guidance on what information the applicant must include in the application.</p>
10	<p>Special consideration.</p> <p>Establishes a protocol for an applicant that is not deemed eligible for SGU veteran status under section 9 to request special consideration from the commissioner of the person's application.</p>
11	<p>Commanders Task Force.</p> <p>Codifies the Commanders Task Force (CTF). The Minnesota CTF was created in 1988 and is comprised of elected leaders, adjutants, and legislative staff from the eight largest congressionally chartered veterans service organizations in Minnesota. The CTF advises the commissioner of veterans affairs, the legislature, and the governor on matters relating to veterans, the families of veterans, and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.</p>
12	<p>Veterans home; eligibility of veterans.</p> <p>Authorizes the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to close a veterans home temporarily in the event that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issues an involuntary termination notice for a Minnesota veterans home. This grant of authority will bring the agency into compliance with applicable veterans home regulations contained in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. This grant of legislative authority is necessary because current law prohibits the commissioner from closing a veterans home without legislative approval.</p>
13	<p>Appropriation; SGU veteran designation.</p> <p>Appropriates \$141,000 in fiscal year 2027 from the general fund to the commissioner of public safety for the costs to implement SGU veteran designations on driver's licenses and Minnesota identification cards. Makes the appropriation onetime. Effective July 1, 2026.</p> <p>Appropriates \$59,000 to the commissioner of veterans affairs.</p>

Section	Description
14	Repealer. Repeals a provision of law that is no longer needed due to the adoption of the policy in section 2.



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