

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Article 1: State Government

- 1 **Historical Society Admission fees.** Strikes language that currently provides that Minnesota Historical Society admission fees for historic sites are deposited in the state treasury.
- 2 **Fund transfer; Department of Administration.** Transfers \$80,000 in fiscal year 2012 from the plant management fund to the general fund, relating to resource recovery activities. Transfers \$6,512 in fiscal year 2012 from the special revenue fund to the general fund, relating to a completed energy program. These are one-time transfers.

Article 2: Veteran Affairs

- 1 **Appropriations.** Standard boilerplate description of terms - i.e., fiscal years and biennium.
- 2 **Veterans Affairs: Appropriation.** A total of \$1,455,000 is appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2013. Of this amount:
 - \$250,000 is for a grant to the *Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)*, addressing homelessness among veterans.
 - \$100,000 is for the cost of administering the new *on-the-job training and apprenticeship program* portion of the Minnesota GI Bill program (under Minn. Stat. § 197.791)
 - \$100,000 is for compensation for *honor guards at the funerals of veterans* (under Minn. Stat. § 197.231).
 - \$1,005,000 is for the *Veterans Service Office grant program* (under Minn. Stat. § 197.608).

By law, an appropriation to any agency in the second year of any biennium becomes a part of the agency's base budget for the following biennium, unless the appropriation language specifies in some manner that it is a one-time appropriation. These appropriations are not so specified and, thus, would

become part of the base funding for fiscal year 2014.

- 3 Honor Guard Funding.** Amended to apply to burials of veterans only within Minnesota.
- 4 County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) Grant Program modified; Certification.** Amends Minn. Stat. § 197.608, which directs Veterans Affairs to provide small grants to Minnesota's County Veteran Service Offices on a three-year rotating basis (changed to annually within the bill).

Current law requires that for a county to be eligible for a grant under this program, any newly-hired probationary county veteran service officer in that county must earn CVSO certification within the three-year grant cycle.

The bill strikes that requirement in lieu of language making grant eligibility for a county contingent upon the CVSO obtaining certification within the past year.

- 5 CVSO Grant Program; Unexpended Funding.** Adds language authorizing commissioner to use any unexpended funding from this program to provide training and education for county veteran service officers.
- 6 CVSO Grant Program; Qualifying Uses.** Conforming change.
- 7 CVSO Grant Program; Grant Amounts.** Current law generally pegs the grant amount to the size of the veteran population in each county, in four tiers from \$1,400 to \$5,600. The bill expands the number of tiers to seven, with grant amounts ranging from \$0 for the smallest veteran population to \$20,000 for the counties with 30,000 or more veterans. The three-year cycle for the current grant program is changed to an annual grant.

The bill also creates a new annual grant of \$8,000 per county for any of five authorized uses, including: outreach, reintegration, collaboration, homelessness, and improvement of office operations.

- 8 to 12 Minnesota GI Bill Program; Expanded.** Directs that the Minnesota GI Bill Program is expanded by authorizing that program funding may be used for *on-the-job training* and *job apprenticeships* for eligible persons.
- 8 Minnesota GI Bill Program; Definitions.** Clarifies that eligibility does not depend upon the actual receipt of any military medal. Also adds definitions of "*On-the-Job Training Program*" and "*Apprenticeship Program*," by cross-reference to federal laws establishing those programs.
- 9 Minnesota GI Bill Program; Commissioner Responsibilities.** Adds the Department of Economic Development and Department of Labor and Industry as agencies with which the commissioner must establish interagency agreements for the additional sub-programs.
- 10 Minnesota GI Bill Program; Eligibility.** Eliminates the "post-9/11" timeframe for military service as a criterion for establishing eligibility for Minnesota GI Bill Program benefits.

Delimits spouse and dependent eligibility by reference to eligibility for GI Bill funding established under federal law.

- 11 Minnesota GI Bill Program; Benefit Amount.** Establishes the following funding levels that for an eligible person participating in an eligible on-the-job training program or apprenticeship program:
- \$1,500 for 6 months of training; and
 - \$6,000 lifetime.

Also establishes that the total amount of Minnesota GI Bill educational assistance is \$10,000 lifetime

(for both the training programs and traditional educational assistance).

- 12** **Minnesota GI Bill Program; Appropriation.** Leaves in place language appropriating to the commissioner of Veterans Affairs "*the amount necessary to pay the benefit amounts (under the Minnesota GI Bill Program) . . . not to exceed \$6 million . . . during any fiscal year.*" Corrects the year specified (from 2013 to 2011).
- 13** **Repealer.** Repeals statutory language referring to the *three-year grant cycle* in the County Veteran Service Office Grant Program (being replaced in the bill with annual grants).