

HCS SB 656 -- VETERANS

SPONSOR: Cierpiot

This bill modifies numerous provisions related to veterans.

HONOR GUARD APPRECIATION DAY (Section 9.302, RSMo)

This bill designates every August 19th as "Honor Guard Appreciation Day" in Missouri.

GHOST ARMY RECOGNITION DAY (Section 9.305)

This bill designates every June 6th as "Ghost Army Recognition Day" in Missouri.

BUDDY CHECK 22 DAY (Section 9.311)

This bill designates the 22nd day of each month as "Buddy Check 22 Day" to encourage citizens check in on veterans and to raise awareness of the problem of suicide facing military personnel.

MISSOURI KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL (Section 10.230)

This bill designates the Missouri Korean War Veterans Memorial located in Kansas City, Missouri as the official Korean War veterans memorial for the state of Missouri.

OFFICIAL GOLD STAR MEMORIAL MONUMENTS OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI  
(Section 10.237-10.239)

This bill designates the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at the College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, the Gold Star Memorial Monument and Pavilion at Jefferson Barracks Park in St. Louis County, and the Gold Star Memorial Monument at the Missouri Capitol in Jefferson City as official Gold Star Memorial Monuments of the state of Missouri.

ATTORNEY GENERAL MILITARY PROGRAM (Section 27.115)

This bill requires the Attorney General to design, implement, and oversee a program to assist members of the military and their families in finding and retaining legal counsel. The program will be marketed to attorneys in addition to military families and will publicize pro bono legal services available to military families. The Attorney General will collaborate with the Missouri Bar in the administration of the program.

#### JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS (Section 42.017)

This bill requires the Missouri Veterans' Commission to seek out business organizations that are interested in hiring veterans for available job opportunities and prominently display the information collected in a table on the commission's website.

#### TEACHER LICENSING FOR MILITARY SPOUSES (Section 168.021)

This bill provides that a provisional certificate issued to any qualified military spouse who is hired to teach in a Missouri public school is valid for three years. Additionally, within 30 days after receiving an application and of completion of the required background check, the State Board of Education must issue a full certificate of license to a spouse of an active duty member of the Armed Forces who meets certain residence requirements if all necessary fees are paid and all other licensing requirements are met.

#### STATE OMBUDSMAN & VETERANS' HOMES (Section 192.2305)

This bill authorizes the Office of State Ombudsman for Long-Term Care Facility Residents to receive, respond to, and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents of Missouri veterans' homes relating to the action, inaction, or decisions of providers or agencies affecting resident health, safety, welfare, or rights. The State Ombudsman or representatives of the office, in addition to all current authority granted by state statute, will have the authority to enter any veterans' home and have access to residents in a reasonable time and manner and have access to resident records with the permission of the resident or the resident's guardian. Additionally, the office will analyze and monitor the development and implementation of federal, state, and local law and regulations regarding Missouri veterans' homes.

#### DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES (Section 208.151)

This bill provides that Missouri members of the Armed Forces and their immediate family will have their eligibility for MO HealthNet developmental disability services temporarily suspended for any period of time during which such person temporarily resides outside of Missouri for reasons relating to military service. Upon returning to the state, the eligibility will be immediately restored. If the military member or an immediate family member is not a legal resident of this state, but would otherwise be eligible for developmental disability services, the individual will be eligible for such services during the time in which the individual is temporarily present in Missouri for reasons relating to military

service.

#### SERVICE DOGS AND ANIMALS (Sections 209.150-209.204)

This bill modifies the definition of a "service dog" to be a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Additionally, this bill adds "mental health service dog" to the definition of a service dog. A mental health service dog, or a psychiatric service dog, is a dog that has been individually trained for an owner who has a psychiatric disability, medical condition, or developmental disability. The dog is trained to perform tasks to mitigate or assist the owner with difficulties directly related to the disability.

Under this bill, any person knowingly misrepresenting a dog as a service dog, as described in the bill, for the purposes of receiving accommodations regarding service dogs under the Americans with Disabilities Act will be guilty of a class C misdemeanor for the first offense and a class B misdemeanor for each subsequent offense. Additionally, any person knowingly misrepresenting any animal as an assistance animal, as described in the bill, for the purposes of receiving accommodations regarding assistance animals under the Fair Housing Act or the Rehabilitation Act will be guilty of a class C misdemeanor for the first offense and a class B misdemeanor for each subsequent offense. Any person violating these provisions will also be civilly liable for any actual damages resulting from such misrepresentation.

The Governor's Council on Disability will prepare and make available online a placard for posting in a front window or door of a business stating that service dogs are welcome and that misrepresenting a service dog is a violation of Missouri law. The Council will also prepare and make available a brochure detailing guidelines regarding service dogs and assistance animals.

#### CHILD PROTECTION FOR MILITARY FAMILIES (Sections 210.109 and 210.150)

This bill requires the Children's Division to attempt to ascertain whether the suspected perpetrator or any person responsible for the care, custody, and control of a child is a member of the Armed Forces after receiving a report on alleged abuse or neglect of a child.

This bill allows appropriate staff of the United States Department of Defense to receive access to investigation records contained in the central registry of the Children's Division and records

maintained by the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services following a report of child abuse and neglect in cases where the suspected perpetrator or any person responsible for the care, custody, and control of the subject child is a member of the Armed Forces.

Additionally, this bill requires the division to report findings in cases where the person responsible for the care, custody, and control of a child is a member of the Armed Forces to the most relevant family advocacy program or other relevant person authorized by the United States Department of Defense to receive reports.

#### PURPLE HEART SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES (Section 301.451)

Currently, a recipient of the Purple Heart medal is charged only regular registration fees to be issued Purple Heart special license plates from the Department of Revenue.

This bill exempts Purple Heart special license plates from vehicle registration fees for the first set of the plates issued to an eligible person.

Under the bill, any registered co-owner of the vehicle is entitled to use and renew the plates until he or she remarries, or for the rest of his or her life if he or she does not remarry.

#### CENTRAL MISSOURI HONOR FLIGHT SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES (Section 301.3069)

This bill establishes a "Central Missouri Honor Flight" special license plate. The plate requires an annual emblem-use fee of \$25, paid to Central Missouri Honor Flight and to be used for financial assistance to transport veterans to Washington D.C. to view veteran memorials, in addition to the \$15 special personalized license plate fee and other requirements and fees as provided by law.

#### MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES (Section 301.3159)

This bill establishes a "Meritorious Service Medal" special license plate. Applicants must provide proof of having been awarded the medal as required by the Director of the Department of Revenue. There will be an additional fee for issuance of the plates equal to the \$15 special personalized license plate fee. Meritorious Service medal license plates will not be transferable to any other person, except that any registered co-owner of the motor vehicle will be entitled to operate the motor vehicle with such plates for the duration of the year licensed in the event of the death of the qualified person.

CONCEALED CARRY PERMITS FOR MILITARY MEMBERS (Section 571.104)

This bill authorizes an active military member of the armed forces to renew his or her permit to carry a concealed weapon by mail. A permit may be picked up in person or sent by certified mail.