

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.
Act 551 of the Regular Session

State of Arkansas
92nd General Assembly
Regular Session, 2019

As Engrossed: H3/7/19
A Bill

SENATE BILL 4

By: Senator T. Garner

By: Representative Wardlaw

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE STUDY ON
VETERANS AFFAIRS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE STUDY
ON VETERANS AFFAIRS.

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

SECTION 1. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. Arkansas Legislative Study on Veterans Affairs – Creation – Purpose.

(a) The House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, and Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs shall meet jointly to conduct the Arkansas Legislative Study on Veterans Affairs.

(b)(1) The chair of the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, and Legislative and Military Affairs and the chair of the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs shall call the first joint meeting of the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs to begin the study within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this act.

(2) In order to interact directly with veterans throughout the State of Arkansas, the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs may hold meetings at various sites throughout the state.



(3) Joint meetings of the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs for the purpose of conducting the study shall be held at least one (1) time every three (3) months but may occur more often at the call of the chairs.

(4) The members of the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs shall be paid per diem and mileage as authorized by law for attendance at meetings of interim committees of the General Assembly.

(c)(1) The purpose of the study is to examine veterans' issues within the State of Arkansas, including without limitation the occurrence of suicide among the veteran population in this state.

(2) In carrying out the purpose of this act, the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs shall:

- (A) Study risk factors for suicide in veterans;
- (B) Review and research options for preventing or reducing the occurrence of suicide among the veteran population in the state;
- (C) Examine mental health care available to veterans within the state;
- (D) Conduct at least one (1) town-hall-style meeting to hear from veterans in the state and their concerns regarding mental health care and other issues affecting veterans in the state;
- (E) Engage the following:
 - (i) The Department of Veterans Affairs;
 - (ii) The Department of Health; and
 - (iii) Mental health professionals licensed to practice in this state;
- (F) Review best practices among other states;
- (G) Review methods to create a statewide program targeting suicide prevention and preventative mental health care for veterans; and
- (H) Study and review other issues that the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs deem relevant to improving the productivity and wellness of veterans residing in this state.

(d) The House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs may establish an advisory board to assist the committees in accomplishing the purposes of the study as stated in this act. If the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs determine that creation of an advisory board would be beneficial, the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs shall adopt rules regarding the membership and duties of the advisory board.

(e) The House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs shall file a final written report of their activities, findings, and recommendations with the Legislative Council on or before December 1, 2020, and the study shall be complete upon that submission.

/s/T. Garner

APPROVED: 3/26/19