

State of Arkansas
91st General Assembly
Regular Session, 2017

A Bill

SENATE BILL 174

By: Senator J. English

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE DUTIES OF THE ARKANSAS VETERANS' COMMISSION; TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF AUTHORIZED ANNUAL STIPENDS AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE DUTIES OF THE ARKANSAS VETERANS' COMMISSION; AND TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF AUTHORIZED ANNUAL STIPENDS AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 20-81-104 is amended to read as follows:
20-81-104. Arkansas Veterans' Commission.

(a) The Arkansas Veterans' Commission is established to ~~serve as an advisory agency to the Veterans' Home;~~

(1) Serve as the advisory body for the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) Serve as a liaison between the Department of Veterans Affairs and a chartered nonprofit veterans organization in this state, including without limitation the:

(A) American Legion;

(B) Department of Arkansas Veterans of Foreign Wars;



(C) Disabled American Veterans; and

(D) Arkansas Veterans Coalition;

(3) Promote and advance the interests of Arkansas veterans by meeting and acting as an advisory board to the General Assembly on all matters affecting Arkansas veterans, their dependents, and survivors, including without limitation by meeting with the members of the House Legislative, Military and Veterans Affairs Permanent Subcommittee of the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs; and

(4) Gather information and data to help improve the operation and efficiency of a Veterans' Home established under § 20-81-105 and a state veterans' cemetery established under § 20-81-112 by consulting with and coordinating with veterans commissions in other states.

(b)(1) The commission shall be composed of fifteen (15) members, who shall be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

(2) Members of the commission shall serve for five-year overlapping terms.

(3) The commission shall annually elect its chair from among its membership.

(4)(A) Members of the commission may receive expense reimbursement and stipends in accordance with § 25-16-901 et seq.

(B)(i) Members of the commission are also authorized to attend conventions, conferences, or meetings of recognized veterans' organizations, herein defined as veterans' organizations listed in the current United States Department of Veterans Affairs Directory of Veterans Service Organizations as meeting the criteria of 38 C.F.R § 14.628, and are entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in attending those conventions, conferences, or meetings in accordance with procedures and limits prescribed by law or regulation for state employees.

(ii) However, a member of the commission shall not be entitled to reimbursement of the expenses authorized in subdivision (b)(4)(B)(i) of this section unless the reimbursement is approved in advance by the commission chair and the director.

~~(C)(i) Provided, a member of the commission shall not be entitled to receive more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) during any fiscal year for stipends and reimbursement of expenses incurred as a member of the~~

~~commission.~~

A member of the commission shall not receive more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) during any fiscal year for stipends and reimbursement of expenses incurred as a member of the commission unless:

(a) Another member of the commission claims less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in stipends and reimbursement of expenses during the fiscal year; and

(b) The commission chairman, subject to the approval of the director, authorizes the transfer of the unclaimed funds authorized by subdivision (b)(4)(C)(i)(a) of this section to another member of the commission to be used for stipends and reimbursement expenses incurred over the authorized one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

(ii) However, a member of the commission shall not receive more than two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) in stipends and reimbursement of expenses in any fiscal year.

~~(c)(1)~~ The commission shall make recommendations to the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the operation and improvement of the home efficiency of a Veterans' Home established under § 20-81-105 and a state veterans' cemetery established under § 20-81-112.

~~(2) The commission shall also act as an advisory board to the General Assembly on all other matters affecting Arkansas veterans, their dependents, and survivors.~~

(d) Quarterly meetings of the commission are authorized at the call of the Chair of the Arkansas Veterans' Commission.