

SB 798 and SB 799

Veterans, Military Affairs and Homeland Security Committee
Tuesday, 11/8/2011

Report from Workgroup formed by Senators Moolenaar and Pappageorge

The Workgroup consisted of representatives from the Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) Commander's Group Legislative Liaisons, Board of Managers for the two State Homes for Veterans, Board of Trustees Chairman and Director of the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (MVTF) and staff of the Senators. (Guest: Staff Liaison for Rep. Damrow)

The Workgroup was charged with reviewing PA 152 and PA 9 and recommending changes. The Workgroup recommends the changes presented in SB 798 & SB 799 that modernizes these two laws encompassing the appointment process, Board representation (county/district committees for PA 9-MVTF also) & other language:

- Each Board will have seven members of honorably discharged veterans and serve terms of three years. Additional language was added that promotes enhanced diversity of skill, work and life experience for Boards to govern in a visionary manner.
- Aligns Board Representatives with a combination of:
 - One Representative each of the Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars who will be listed as representing their VSO. (Retains some previously named VSOs - preserves history)
 - One Representative will be in a 4th VSO position and the following organizations will be able to submit candidates for consideration: AMVETS, Vietnam Veterans of America, Marine Corp League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Polish Legion of American Veterans, Non-Commissioned Officers Association, Jewish War Veterans, and Catholic War Veterans. This representative will be listed as representing their VSO. (Allows for other Veteran Service Organizations not previously afforded an opportunity to serve.)
 - Three positions on each Board will be independent veteran representatives. They will be listed as 'Independent Representatives' no matter if they are affiliated with a VSO. (Allows opportunity for Veterans to serve who are not members of Veteran Service Organizations.)
- Michigan's total veteran population is over 703,000. Less than 25% of the state's veterans are presently eligible for appointment.
- These legislative changes, if enacted, afford all veterans an opportunity to be on one of these two boards.
- Some language that was outdated or not used anymore was updated or deleted.