

SENATE/HOUSE FILE \_\_\_\_\_  
BY (PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS BILL)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to qualifications of commissioners, executive  
2 directors, and administrators of county commissions of  
3 veteran affairs.  
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 35A.5, subsection 9, Code 2024, is  
2 amended by striking the subsection and inserting in lieu  
3 thereof the following:

4 9. Verify each executive director and administrator of a  
5 county commission of veteran affairs is fully qualified to work  
6 in the person's position. Qualifications include but are not  
7 limited to all of the following:

8 a. The person has obtained certification that is federally  
9 required for the executive director's or administrator's  
10 position within twelve months of beginning the person's  
11 employment.

12 b. The person has obtained a personal identification  
13 verification card necessary to access the veterans benefits  
14 management system within twelve months of beginning the  
15 person's employment.

16 c. The person maintains certification that is federally  
17 required for the executive director's or administrator's  
18 position.

19 d. The person maintains an active personal identification  
20 verification card and has access to the veterans benefits  
21 management system.

22 e. The person is proficient in the use of electronic  
23 mail, general computer use, and use of the internet to access  
24 information regarding facilities, benefits, and services  
25 available to veterans and their families.

26 Sec. 2. Section 35A.16, subsection 3, paragraph a, Code  
27 2024, is amended to read as follows:

28 a. If sufficient moneys are available, the department  
29 shall annually allocate ten thousand dollars to each county  
30 commission of veteran affairs, or to each county sharing the  
31 services of an executive director or administrator pursuant  
32 to chapter 28E, to be used to provide services to veterans  
33 pursuant to section 35B.6 and to provide for and maintain  
34 accreditation in accordance with the policies and procedures of  
35 the United States department of veterans affairs. Each county

1 receiving an allocation shall annually report on expenditure of  
2 the allocation in a form agreed to by the department and county  
3 representatives.

4 Sec. 3. Section 35A.17, subsection 1, Code 2024, is amended  
5 to read as follows:

6 1. A county commission of veteran affairs training program  
7 is created under the control of the department for the purpose  
8 of providing training, certification, and accreditation  
9 opportunities for county commissions of veteran affairs  
10 commissioners, executive directors, administrators, and  
11 employees.

12 Sec. 4. Section 35A.17, subsection 3, paragraph a, Code  
13 2024, is amended to read as follows:

14 a. The department shall use funds deposited in the county  
15 commission of veteran affairs training program account to  
16 organize statewide or regional training conferences and provide  
17 training, certification, and accreditation opportunities for  
18 county commissions of veteran affairs commissioners, executive  
19 directors, administrators, and employees, consistent with the  
20 requirements of section 35A.5, subsection 9.

21 Sec. 5. Section 35B.6, subsection 1, paragraph c, Code 2024,  
22 is amended to read as follows:

23 c. (1) Upon the employment of an executive director or  
24 administrator, the executive director or administrator shall  
25 complete a course ~~of~~ for the purpose of obtaining certification  
26 ~~training provided by the department of veterans affairs~~  
27 ~~pursuant to section 35A.5~~ federally required for the person's  
28 position and a personal identification verification card  
29 necessary to access the veterans benefits management system.  
30 If an executive director or administrator fails to obtain  
31 certification or a personal identification verification card  
32 within one year of being employed, the executive director or  
33 administrator shall be removed from office. ~~The department~~  
34 ~~shall issue the executive director or administrator a~~  
35 ~~certificate of training after completion of the certification~~

1 ~~training course. To maintain certification, the~~ Upon a  
2 request from a county commission of veteran affairs and based  
3 on extenuating circumstances, the commandant of the Iowa  
4 department of veterans affairs may extend the time frame for  
5 an executive director or administrator to obtain a personal  
6 identification verification card.

7 (2) An executive director or administrator shall satisfy  
8 the continuing education requirements established by the  
9 national association of county veterans service officers and  
10 the United States department of veterans affairs. Failure  
11 of an executive director or administrator to maintain  
12 certification shall be cause for removal from office. The  
13 expenses of training the executive director or administrator  
14 shall be paid from the appropriation authorized in section  
15 35B.14.

16 (3) An executive director or administrator shall satisfy  
17 the continuing education requirements necessary to maintain an  
18 active personal identification verification card and access  
19 to the veterans benefits management system. Failure of an  
20 executive director or administrator to maintain certification  
21 and access to the veterans benefits management system shall be  
22 cause for removal from office.

23

EXPLANATION

24

The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
25 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

26

27 This bill replaces the Iowa department of veterans affairs'  
28 (IDVA) duty to provide certification training to executive  
29 directors and administrators of county commissions of veteran  
30 affairs (CCVA) with the duty to verify each executive director  
31 and administrator of a CCVA is fully qualified to work in the  
32 person's position. Such qualifications include but are not  
33 limited to obtaining certification that is federally required  
34 for the executive director's or administrator's position within  
35 12 months of beginning the person's employment; obtaining a  
personal identification verification (PIV) card necessary to

1 access the veterans benefits management system (VBMS) within  
2 12 months of beginning the person's employment; maintaining  
3 certification that is federally required for the executive  
4 director's or administrator's position; maintaining an active  
5 PIV card and access to VBMS; and having proficiency in the  
6 use of electronic mail, general computer use, and use of the  
7 internet to access information regarding facilities, benefits,  
8 and services available to veterans and their families.

9 The bill requires a CCVA executive director or administrator  
10 to complete a course for the purpose of obtaining certification  
11 federally required for the person's position and a PIV  
12 card necessary to access VBMS. If an executive director or  
13 administrator fails to obtain certification or a PIV card  
14 within one year of being employed, the executive director  
15 or administrator shall be removed from office unless the  
16 deadline is extended upon the CCVA's request and the approval  
17 of the commandant of the IDVA. Under current law, the IDVA is  
18 required to provide the training and issue a certificate of  
19 completion.

20 The bill also adds CCVA commissioners to those who may  
21 receive training under the county commission of veteran affairs  
22 training program.

23 The bill requires an executive director or administrator  
24 to satisfy the continuing education requirements established  
25 by the United States department of veterans affairs and the  
26 requirements necessary to maintain an active PIV card and  
27 access to the VBMS. Failure of an executive director or  
28 administrator to maintain certification and access to VBMS  
29 shall be cause for removal from office.

30 By operation of law, the bill affects the report that the  
31 IDVA must submit under Code section 35A.5 (IDVA duties) and  
32 the obligations that a county must meet for funding under Code  
33 section 35A.16 (CCVA fund).