

Senate File 2466 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2466
BY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(SUCCESSOR TO SF 2282)
(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 3079)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to veterans services and making appropriations.
2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. **35.4 Power of attorney.**

2 The provisions of this chapter and chapters 35A, 35B, 35C, and
3 35D do not limit the ability of a veterans' service organization
4 recognized pursuant to 38 C.F.R. §14.628(c) to represent a
5 veteran in the United States department of veterans affairs
6 benefit claims process or to be granted the power of attorney for
7 a veteran with the United States department of veterans affairs.
8 A veteran may grant a veterans' service organization that is
9 recognized pursuant to 38 C.F.R. §14.628(c) power of attorney for
10 the purposes of filing claims with the United States department
11 of veterans affairs.

12 Sec. 2. Section 35A.5, subsection 6, paragraph b,
13 subparagraph (2), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

14 (2) All ~~funds~~ moneys received by the department for the
15 purposes established in subparagraph (1) shall be deposited
16 in the county ~~commission of veteran affairs training veterans~~
17 services excellence training program and administration account
18 established in section 35A.16, subsection 4.

19 Sec. 3. Section 35A.5, subsection 9, Code 2026, is amended to
20 read as follows:

21 9. Verify each executive director and administrator of a
22 county commission of veteran affairs ~~is fully qualified to work~~
23 ~~in the person's position. Qualifications include but are not~~
24 ~~limited to~~ has all of the following credentials:

25 a. The person has obtained certification that is federally
26 required for the executive director's or administrator's position
27 within twelve months of beginning the person's employment.

28 b. The person has obtained a personal identification
29 verification card necessary to access the veterans benefits
30 management system within twelve months of beginning the person's
31 employment.

32 c. The person maintains certification that is federally
33 required for the executive director's or administrator's
34 position.

35 d. The person maintains an active personal identification

1 verification card and has access to the veterans benefits
2 management system.

3 e. ~~The person is proficient in the use of electronic~~
4 ~~mail, general computer use, and use of the internet to~~
5 ~~access information regarding facilities, benefits, and services~~
6 ~~available to veterans and their families in compliance with~~
7 education and training standards established by the commandant.

8 Sec. 4. Section 35A.5, Code 2026, is amended by adding the
9 following new subsections:

10 NEW SUBSECTION. 16A. Establish and maintain a statewide
11 standardized electronic claim system to be used by county
12 veterans service offices for submission of all United States
13 department of veterans affairs claims.

14 NEW SUBSECTION. 16B. Communicate county veterans service
15 office performance metrics to county commissions of veteran
16 affairs and boards of supervisors through quarterly reports.

17 Sec. 5. Section 35A.13, subsection 5, Code 2026, is amended
18 to read as follows:

19 5. a. For each fiscal year that the balance of the trust
20 fund on July 1 is below fifty seventy-five million dollars,
21 the interest and earnings on moneys in the fund and the first
22 five hundred thousand dollars transferred pursuant to section
23 99G.39 from the lottery fund are appropriated to the commission
24 to be used to achieve the purposes of subsection 8. Moneys
25 appropriated to the commission under this paragraph that remain
26 unencumbered or unobligated at the end of the fiscal year shall
27 revert to the fund.

28 ~~b. For each fiscal year that the balance of the trust fund~~
29 ~~on July 1 is above fifty million dollars but the balance of the~~
30 ~~fund was below fifty million dollars on July 1 of the previous~~
31 ~~fiscal year, moneys transferred pursuant to section 99G.39 from~~
32 ~~the lottery fund are appropriated to the commission to be used~~
33 ~~to achieve the purposes of subsection 8. Moneys appropriated to~~
34 ~~the commission under this paragraph that remain unencumbered or~~
35 ~~unobligated at the end of the fiscal year shall revert to the~~

1 ~~fund.~~

2 ~~e. For each fiscal year that the balance of the trust fund~~
3 ~~on July 1 is above fifty million dollars and the balance of the~~
4 ~~fund was above fifty million dollars on July 1 of the previous~~
5 ~~fiscal year, moneys equal to the net income the fund received~~
6 ~~in the previous fiscal year are appropriated to the commission~~
7 ~~to be used to achieve the purposes of subsection 8. Moneys~~
8 ~~appropriated to the commission under this paragraph that remain~~
9 ~~unencumbered or unobligated at the end of the fiscal year shall~~
10 ~~revert to the fund. For the purposes of this paragraph, "income"~~
11 ~~means moneys credited to the veterans trust fund pursuant to~~
12 ~~subsection 2 and moneys transferred pursuant to section 99G.39.~~

13 ~~d. b.~~ Notwithstanding paragraphs paragraph "a", "b", and
14 "e", moneys credited to the war orphans educational assistance
15 account shall be expended as provided in subsection 9.

16 ~~e. c.~~ Notwithstanding paragraphs paragraph "a", "b", and
17 "e", moneys transferred under subsection 6 to the county
18 commission of veteran affairs training veterans services
19 excellence training program and administration account shall be
20 expended as provided in section 35A.16.

21 Sec. 6. Section 35A.13, subsection 6, Code 2026, is amended
22 to read as follows:

23 6. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 2026, and
24 for each subsequent fiscal year, there is transferred to
25 the county commission of veteran affairs training veterans
26 services excellence training program and administration account
27 of the county commissions of veteran affairs veterans services
28 excellence fund created in section 35A.16, from the moneys
29 transferred pursuant to section 99G.39 from the lottery fund to
30 the veterans trust fund, three hundred thousand dollars.

31 Sec. 7. Section 35A.16, Code 2026, is amended to read as
32 follows:

33 **35A.16 County ~~commissions of veteran affairs~~ veterans**
34 **services excellence fund — appropriation.**

35 1. a. A county ~~commissions of veteran affairs~~ veterans

1 services excellence fund is created within the state treasury
 2 under the control of the department. The fund shall consist of
 3 appropriations made to the fund and any other moneys available
 4 to and obtained or accepted by the department from the federal
 5 government or private sources for deposit in the fund. Moneys
 6 in the fund are appropriated to the department to be used to
 7 incentivize counties to effectively increase veteran outreach
 8 and efficiency in the application for individual federal veteran
 9 compensation.

10 b. There is appropriated from the general fund of the state
 11 to the department, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009
 12 2026, and for each subsequent fiscal year, the sum of nine
 13 hundred ninety thousand dollars to be credited to the county
 14 ~~commissions of veteran affairs~~ veterans services excellence fund.

15 2. Notwithstanding section 12C.7, interest or earnings on
 16 moneys in the ~~county commissions of veteran affairs~~ fund shall
 17 be credited to the ~~county commissions of veteran affairs~~ fund.
 18 Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys remaining in the ~~county~~
 19 ~~commissions of veteran affairs~~ fund at the end of a fiscal year
 20 shall not revert to the ~~general fund of the state~~.

21 3. a. If sufficient moneys are available, the department
 22 shall annually ~~allocate ten thousand dollars~~ make allocations
 23 from the fund to each county commission of veteran affairs, or
 24 to each county sharing the services of an executive director
 25 or administrator pursuant to chapter 28E, ~~to~~. For the fiscal
 26 year beginning July 1, 2026, the department shall allocate moneys
 27 equally to each qualifying county. For the fiscal year beginning
 28 July 1, 2027, and each subsequent fiscal year, the department
 29 shall allocate moneys based on performance criteria determined by
 30 the department. The moneys shall be used to provide services to
 31 veterans pursuant to section 35B.6 and provide for and maintain
 32 accreditation in accordance with the policies and procedures
 33 of the department and the United States department of veterans
 34 affairs. Each county receiving an allocation shall annually
 35 report on expenditure of the allocation ~~in~~ on a form ~~agreed to~~

1 provided by the department ~~and county representatives.~~

2 b. If a county fails to be in compliance with the
3 requirements of section 35B.6 on June 30 of each fiscal year, all
4 moneys received by the county pursuant to this subsection during
5 that fiscal year shall be reimbursed to the ~~county commissions of~~
6 ~~veteran affairs~~ fund.

7 c. Moneys distributed to a county under this subsection shall
8 be used to supplement and not supplant any existing funding
9 provided by the county or received by the county from any other
10 source. The department shall adopt a maintenance of effort
11 requirement for moneys distributed under this subsection.

12 4. A county ~~commission of veteran affairs~~ veterans services
13 excellence training program and administration account shall be
14 is established within the ~~county commissions of veteran affairs~~
15 fund. Any moneys remaining in the fund after the allocations
16 under subsection 3 shall be credited to the account and are
17 appropriated to the department to fund the county commission of
18 ~~veteran affairs training program under section 35A.5, subsection~~
19 ~~6, and training for department personnel. In addition, from~~
20 ~~the moneys transferred to the account from the veterans trust~~
21 ~~fund created in section 35A.13, the department shall annually~~
22 ~~allocate three thousand dollars to each county commission of~~
23 ~~veteran affairs, or to each county sharing the services of an~~
24 ~~executive director or administrator pursuant to chapter 28E, to~~
25 ~~be used for national training and related expenses of county~~
26 ~~veteran service officers and appropriate staff. Moneys in the~~
27 account are appropriated to the department to provide training
28 and support for county commissions of veteran affairs, including
29 but not limited to a statewide standardized electronic claim
30 system for county submissions of claims to the United States
31 department of veterans affairs and education and training for
32 county veterans service officers.

33 Sec. 8. Section 35B.6, subsection 1, paragraph d, Code 2026,
34 is amended by adding the following new subparagraph:

35 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (4) Utilize the statewide standardized

1 electronic claim system authorized and provided by the department
2 of veterans affairs to file all claims for United States
3 department of veterans affairs benefits.

4 Sec. 9. Section 35B.7, Code 2026, is amended to read as
5 follows:

6 **35B.7 Meetings — report — budget.**

7 The commission shall meet monthly and at other times as
8 necessary. At the monthly meeting, the commission shall
9 determine who ~~are~~ is entitled to county benefits and the probable
10 amount required to be expended. The commission shall also
11 review quarterly performance reports generated by the department
12 of veterans affairs to assess the effectiveness of delivery of
13 federal benefits. The commission shall meet annually to prepare
14 an estimated budget for all expenditures to be made in the next
15 fiscal year and certify the budget to the board of supervisors.
16 The board may approve or reduce the budget for valid reasons
17 shown and entered of record and the board's decision is final.

18 Sec. 10. Section 99G.39, subsection 3, Code 2026, is amended
19 to read as follows:

20 3. Two million five hundred thousand dollars in lottery
21 revenues shall be transferred each fiscal year to the veterans
22 trust fund established pursuant to section 35A.13 prior to
23 deposit of the lottery revenues in the general fund of the state
24 pursuant to section 99G.40, unless the balance of the veterans
25 trust fund is equal to or greater than seventy-five million
26 dollars at the beginning of the fiscal year. However, if the
27 balance of the veterans trust fund is ~~fifty~~ seventy-five million
28 dollars or more, the moneys ~~shall be~~ are appropriated to the
29 department of veterans affairs for distribution, with the first
30 three hundred thousand dollars transferred to the county veterans
31 services excellence training program and administration account
32 created in section 35A.16, and the remainder allocated to county
33 directors of veteran affairs, with fifty percent of the moneys to
34 be distributed equally to each county and fifty percent of the
35 moneys to be distributed to each county based upon the population

1 of veterans in the county, so long as the moneys distributed to a
2 county do not supplant moneys appropriated by that county for the
3 county director of veteran affairs.

4 EXPLANATION

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

7 This bill provides that Code chapters 35, 35A, 35B, 35C, and
8 35D do not limit the ability of a veterans' service organization
9 to represent a veteran in the United States department of
10 veterans affairs benefit claims process or to be granted power
11 of attorney by a veteran for those purposes.

12 The bill replaces the county commissions of veteran affairs
13 fund and training program account with the county veterans
14 services excellence fund and training program and administration
15 account. Moneys in the fund are appropriated to the department
16 of veterans affairs (IDVA) to be used to incentivize counties
17 to effectively increase veteran outreach and efficiency in the
18 application for individual federal veteran compensation.

19 Under current law, IDVA annually allocates \$10,000 from the
20 fund to each county commission of veteran affairs (CCVA) or to
21 each county sharing the services of an executive director or
22 administrator, and each county must report on the expenditure
23 of its allocation in a form agreed to by IDVA and the county
24 representatives. The bill strikes the specified allocation
25 amount. The bill provides that for FY 2026-2027, each county
26 shall receive an equal amount of moneys from the fund.
27 For subsequent fiscal years, allocations shall be based on
28 performance criteria established by IDVA.

29 The bill requires the veterans services excellence training
30 program and administration account to fund training and support
31 for CCVAs and strikes provisions that credit remaining moneys in
32 the fund to the account and that allocate \$3,000 to each CCVA
33 or each county sharing the services of an executive director or
34 administrator for training expenses.

35 The bill requires IDVA to verify that each executive director

1 and administrator of a CCVA be in compliance with education and
2 training standards established by the commandant and removes the
3 requirement to verify they are proficient in general computer
4 use.

5 The bill requires IDVA to create a statewide standardized
6 electronic claim system through which county veterans service
7 offices must submit all United States department of veterans
8 affairs claims and requires IDVA to communicate county veterans
9 service office performance metrics to CCVAs and boards of
10 supervisors. A CCVA must review the quarterly performance report
11 generated by IDVA.

12 The bill requires that for each fiscal year in which the
13 balance of the veterans trust fund is below \$75 million, rather
14 than \$50 million, the interest on the veterans trust fund and the
15 first \$500,000 received from the lottery fund is appropriated to
16 the commission of veterans affairs to provide various benefits
17 to veterans and veterans' families according to Code section
18 35A.13(8). The bill removes requirements for moneys in the
19 veterans trust fund when the balance is above \$50 million.

20 Under current law, when the balance of the veterans trust fund
21 is \$50 million or more, lottery revenues that would otherwise be
22 deposited in the veterans trust fund are distributed to county
23 directors of veteran affairs. The bill provides that this
24 distribution shall not occur unless the balance of the veterans
25 trust fund is \$75 million or more and requires the first \$300,000
26 of these moneys to be transferred to the county veterans services
27 excellence training program and administration account.