

## SENATE BILL No. 277

By Committee on Federal and State Affairs

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9 AN ACT concerning the Kansas commission on veterans affairs; relating  
10 to the claims assistance and grants programs; amending K.S.A. 2006  
11 Supp. 73-1234 and 73-1235 and repealing the existing sections.  
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13 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

14 Section 1. K.S.A. 2006 Supp. 73-1234 is hereby amended to read as  
15 follows: 73-1234. (a) The Kansas commission on veterans affairs shall  
16 establish and administer a veterans claims assistance program in accord-  
17 ance with this section to improve the coordination of veterans benefits  
18 counseling in Kansas to maximize the effective and efficient use of tax-  
19 payer dollars and to ensure that every veteran is served and receives  
20 claims counseling and assistance. The Kansas commission on veterans  
21 affairs shall establish and commence operations under the veterans claims  
22 assistance program in accordance with this section on or before August  
23 1, 2006. The Kansas commission on veterans affairs shall appoint the  
24 director of the veterans claims assistance program, who shall be in the  
25 classified service under the Kansas civil service act.

26 (b) The veterans claims assistance program shall be implemented and  
27 administered through annual service grants to ~~eligible~~ veterans service  
28 organizations pursuant to grant agreements entered into with the Kansas  
29 commission on veterans affairs in accordance with this section. All service  
30 grants and grant agreements shall be subject to the provisions of appro-  
31 priation acts.

32 (c) The Kansas commission on veterans affairs shall adopt rules and  
33 regulations to implement and administer the veterans claims assistance  
34 program and the service grant program. The rules and regulations shall  
35 include: (1) The detailed requirements of the veterans claims assistance  
36 program and grant agreements; (2) the responsibilities of all parties to  
37 the grant agreements; (3) the duration of the grants; (4) any insurance or  
38 bonding requirements; (5) the format and frequency of progress and final  
39 reports; (6) the initial and continuing training requirements for veterans  
40 claims assistance representatives; (7) the provisions of a quality assurance  
41 program for the veterans claims assistance program and the services per-  
42 formed by veterans service organizations receiving grants under this sec-  
43 tion; and (8) any other information or requirements deemed necessary

1 or appropriate by the commission.

2 (d) All moneys provided to veterans service organizations through  
3 service grants shall be used only for salaries, wages, related employer  
4 contributions and personnel costs, and operating and capital outlay ex-  
5 penditures for training and equipment for veterans claims assistance rep-  
6 resentatives and necessary support and managerial staff.

7 (e) Training activities for veterans claims assistance representatives  
8 shall be the responsibility of the veterans service organization employing  
9 the veterans claims assistance representatives and shall be conducted by  
10 qualified veterans claims assistance representatives.

11 (f) To receive a service grant under this section to perform services  
12 under the veterans claims assistance program, a veterans service organi-  
13 zation shall satisfy the following eligibility requirements: (1) The veterans  
14 service organization shall be congressionally chartered by the United  
15 States Congress; (2) the veterans service organization shall agree ~~to cross-~~  
16 ~~accredit the officers and employees, in a timely manner, to accredit the~~  
17 ~~veterans service officers of the Kansas commission on veterans affairs and~~  
18 ~~veterans claims assistance representatives of other veterans service or-~~  
19 ~~ganizations who are performing services under the veterans claims assis-~~  
20 ~~tance program, (3) agree to participate in one-stop veterans service cen-~~  
21 ~~ters at each federal veterans administration medical center in Kansas; (4)~~  
22 ~~who have been trained to the level required by the national association of~~  
23 ~~county veterans service officers; (3) demonstrate the receipt of monetary~~  
24 or service support from its own organization for the veterans claims as-  
25 sistance program; and ~~(5)~~ (4) demonstrate the ability to comply with the  
26 requirements prescribed by this section or adopted by the Kansas com-  
27 mission on veterans affairs under this statute for accounting, service work  
28 activity and other satisfactory performance requirements and measures.

29 (g) Each veterans service organization receiving a service grant under  
30 this section shall file with the Kansas commission on veterans affairs,  
31 within 90 days after the end of the veterans service organization's fiscal  
32 year, a detailed statement prepared by a certified public accountant which  
33 sets forth an accounting of all expenditures of moneys received under the  
34 service grant. Each veterans service organization receiving a service grant  
35 under this section shall apply for the grant funding on an annual basis,  
36 shall demonstrate satisfactory performance based on completion of min-  
37 imum requirements during the preceding annual period and shall certify  
38 that all veterans service representatives funded with service grant moneys  
39 meet minimum training requirements to provide for core competencies.

40 (h) The Kansas commission on veterans affairs shall develop and  
41 maintain a central database registry regarding claims outcome data re-  
42 ceived from veterans claims assistance representatives under the veterans  
43 claims assistance program.

1     Sec. 2. K.S.A. 2006 Supp. 73-1235 is hereby amended to read as  
2 follows: 73-1235. (a) There is hereby established with the Kansas com-  
3 mission on veterans affairs an advisory board which shall be known as the  
4 veterans claims assistance advisory board. The advisory board shall advise  
5 the Kansas commission on veterans affairs in the implementation and  
6 administration of the veterans claims assistance program.

7     (b) The advisory board shall consist of ~~six~~ *eight* members as follows:

8     (1) The director of the veterans claims assistance program, who shall  
9 be a permanent member of the advisory board and shall serve as the  
10 chairperson of the advisory board.

11     (2) ~~Three~~ *Four* members of the advisory board shall be veterans rep-  
12 resenting *the following four large* veterans service organizations:-

13     (A) *American legion;*

14     (B) *disabled American veterans;*

15     (C) *veterans of foreign wars; and*

16     (D) *vietnam veterans of America.*

17     The director shall notify the state level unit of each national veterans  
18 service organization ~~which has an office in the federal department of~~  
19 ~~veteran affairs regional office in Wichita, Kansas, and request written~~  
20 ~~confirmation of the intent of the veterans service organization to partici-~~  
21 ~~ipate in the veterans claims assistance program and to request an annual~~  
22 ~~service grant. Each such veterans service organization submitting such~~  
23 ~~confirmation shall prepare and to~~ submit a list of three nominations of  
24 veterans from such veterans service organization. The governor shall ap-  
25 point one veteran as a member of the advisory board from each list.

26     (3) Two legislators, one from each house, shall be appointed to the  
27 advisory board with the speaker of the house of representatives and pres-  
28 ident of the senate each appointing a member. One legislator shall be a  
29 member of the democratic party and one legislator shall be a member of  
30 the republican party.

31     (c) Within 90 days of the effective date of this act, the governor, the  
32 speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate  
33 shall appoint the initial members of the advisory board. Of the initial  
34 appointments to the advisory board by the governor, one shall be for a  
35 term of one year, one shall be for a term of two years and one shall be  
36 for a term ending three years after the date of the initial appointment.  
37 After the initial appointments, terms of office of the members appointed  
38 by the governor shall be for three years. The term of office of each mem-  
39 ber appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives or the pres-  
40 ident of the senate shall end on the first day of the regular session of the  
41 legislature which commences in the first odd-numbered year occurring  
42 after the year such member was appointed.

43     (d) Each member of the advisory board, other than the director of

1 the veterans claims assistance program, shall serve until a successor is  
2 appointed and qualified. Whenever a vacancy occurs in the membership  
3 of the advisory board for any reason other than the expiration of a mem-  
4 ber's term of office, the governor, the speaker of the house of represen-  
5 tatives or president of the senate shall appoint a successor of like quali-  
6 fications to fill the unexpired term in accordance with this section. In the  
7 case of any vacancy occurring in the position of an advisory board member  
8 who was appointed from a list of nominations submitted by a veterans  
9 service organization, the governor shall notify that veterans service or-  
10 ganization of the vacant position and request a list of three nominations  
11 of veterans from which the governor shall appoint a successor to the  
12 advisory board.

13 (e) Annually, the advisory board shall elect a vice-chairperson and  
14 secretary from among its members and shall meet at least four times each  
15 year at the call of the chairperson.

16 (f) The members of the advisory board attending meetings of the  
17 advisory board or attending a subcommittee meeting thereof authorized  
18 by the advisory board shall receive no compensation for their services but  
19 shall be paid subsistence allowances, mileage and other expenses as pro-  
20 vided in subsections (b), (c) and (d) of K.S.A. 75-3223 and amendments  
21 thereto.

22 Sec. 3. K.S.A. 2006 Supp. 73-1234 and 73-1235 are hereby repealed.

23 Sec. 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its  
24 publication in the statute book.