

## Chapter 12

**(House Bill 431)**

AN ACT concerning

**Department of Veterans Affairs – Renaming and Deputy Secretary of Military Family Policy and Programs**

FOR the purpose of renaming the Department of Veterans Affairs to be the Department of Veterans and Military Families; renaming the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to be the Secretary of Veterans and Military Families; requiring the Secretary to appoint a Deputy Secretary of Military Family Policy and Programs; providing that the Department of Veterans and Military Families is the successor of the Department of Veterans Affairs; requiring the publisher of the Annotated Code of Maryland, in consultation with the Department of Legislative Services, to correct cross-references and terminology in the Code that are rendered incorrect by this Act; and generally relating to the renaming of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – State Government

Section 8–201(b)(21); and 9–901, 9–902(a) and (b), 9–908(b), 9–914(b)(1), 9–933, 9–934(a)(2), 9–943(b)(1), and 9–951(a)(1) to be under the amended subtitle “Subtitle 9. Department of Veterans and Military Families”

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – State Government

Section 9–902.1

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – State Government**

8–201.

(b) The principal departments of the Executive Branch of the State government are:

(21) Veterans **[Affairs] AND MILITARY FAMILIES.**

Subtitle 9. Department of Veterans [Affairs] **AND MILITARY FAMILIES.**

9–901.

- (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (b) “Board” means the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Veterans Trust.
- (c) “Department” means the Department of Veterans [Affairs] **AND MILITARY FAMILIES.**
- (d) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Veterans [Affairs] **AND MILITARY FAMILIES.**
- (e) “Trust” means the Maryland Veterans Trust.
- (f) Except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, “veteran” means an individual who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, other than for training, and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

9–902.

- (a) There is a Department of Veterans [Affairs] **AND MILITARY FAMILIES**, established as a principal department of the State government.
- (b) The head of the Department is the Secretary of Veterans [Affairs] **AND MILITARY FAMILIES** who shall be:
  - (1) a veteran who has an honorable discharge from active service with a uniformed service of the United States; and
  - (2) appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

**9–902.1.**

- (A) THE SECRETARY SHALL APPOINT A DEPUTY SECRETARY OF MILITARY FAMILY POLICY AND PROGRAMS.**
- (B) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SHALL SERVE AT THE PLEASURE OF THE SECRETARY.**
- (C) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY IS ENTITLED TO THE SALARY PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.**

**(D) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SHALL DIRECT POLICY AND PROGRAMS RELATED TO MILITARY FAMILIES.**

9-908.

(b) There is a Veterans' Memorials and Monuments Program administered by the Department [of Veterans Affairs].

9-914.

(b) The Board of Trustees shall consist of the following 11 members:

(1) the Secretary [of Veterans Affairs], ex officio, or the Secretary's designee, who shall serve as the chair;

9-933.

There is a War Memorial Commission in the Department [of Veterans Affairs].

9-934.

(a) (2) Of the 10 Commission members:

(i) 5 shall be appointed by the Secretary [of Veterans Affairs], with the approval of the Governor; and

(ii) 5 shall be appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore City.

9-943.

(b) (1) The director shall develop mechanisms for outreach to be disseminated by direct mail and through community-based veterans organizations, the Department [of Veterans Affairs], the Department of Human Services, the Maryland Department of Health, and any other State agency or unit the director considers appropriate.

9-951.

(a) The Commission consists of the following members:

(1) the designee of the Secretary [of Veterans Affairs];

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, as provided in this Act:

(a) The Department of Veterans and Military Families is the successor of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) In every law, executive order, rule, regulation, policy, or document created by an official, an employee, or a unit of this State, the names and titles of those agencies and officials mean the names and titles of the successor agency or official.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That nothing in this Act affects the term of office of an appointed or elected member of any commission, office, department, agency, or other unit. An individual who is a member of a unit on the effective date of this Act shall remain for the balance of the term to which appointed or elected, unless the member sooner dies, resigns, or is removed under provisions of law.

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That any transaction or employment status affected by or flowing from any change of nomenclature or any statute amended by this Act and validly entered into or existing before the effective date of this Act and every right, duty, or interest flowing from a statute amended by this Act remains valid after the effective date of this Act and may be terminated, completed, consummated, or enforced as required or allowed by any statute amended by this Act as though the amendment had not occurred. If a change in nomenclature involves a change in name or designation of any State unit, the successor unit shall be considered in all respects as having the powers and obligations granted the former unit.

SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) The continuity of every commission, office, department, agency, or other unit is retained.

(b) The personnel, records, files, furniture, fixtures, and other properties and all appropriations, credits, assets, liabilities, and obligations of each retained unit are continued as the personnel, records, files, furniture, fixtures, properties, appropriations, credits, assets, liabilities, and obligations of the unit under the laws enacted by this Act.

SECTION 6. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That letterhead, business cards, and other documents reflecting the renaming of the Department of Veterans Affairs to be the Department of Veterans and Military Families may not be used until all letterhead, business cards, and other documents already in print and reflecting the name of the Department before the effective date of this Act have been used.

SECTION 7. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the publisher of the Annotated Code of Maryland, in consultation with and subject to the approval of the Department of Legislative Services, shall correct, with no further action required by the General Assembly, cross-references and terminology rendered incorrect by this Act. The publisher shall adequately describe any correction that is made in an editor's note following the section affected.

SECTION 8. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

**Approved by the Governor, April 9, 2024.**