

1 ENGROSSED SENATE
2 BILL NO. 1970

By: Simpson and Shortey of the
Senate

3 and

4 Hardin of the House

5
6
7 An Act relating to soldiers and sailors; amending 72
8 O.S. 2011, Section 63.1, which relates to the War
9 Veterans Commission; updating language; amending 72
10 O.S. 2011, Section 63.2, which relates to membership
11 of the Commission; changing requirements; providing
for the filling of vacancies; amending 72 O.S. 2011,
Section 63.3, which relates to duties of the
Commission; updating language; and providing an
effective date.

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13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

14 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 72 O.S. 2011, Section 63.1, is
15 amended to read as follows:

16 Section 63.1. There is hereby created the ~~War~~ Oklahoma Veterans
17 Commission ~~of Oklahoma~~, and the Oklahoma Department of Veterans
18 Affairs, which shall be a cabinet-level department pursuant to the
19 provisions of Section 10.3 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes.
20 The Department shall consist of a departmental headquarters and such
21 Veterans Centers as are operated by the Department. The Department
22 shall be administered under such rules, regulations and policies as
23 may be prescribed by the ~~War~~ Oklahoma Veterans Commission. ~~All~~ Any
24 reference in any law of this state referring to or naming the

1 Soldiers Relief Commission shall be construed to refer to and name
2 the ~~War~~ Oklahoma Veterans Commission ~~of Oklahoma~~.

3 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 72 O.S. 2011, Section 63.2, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 Section 63.2. The ~~War~~ Oklahoma Veterans Commission ~~of Oklahoma~~
6 shall consist of nine (9) members. ~~Members~~ At least eight (8)
7 members shall be honorably discharged veterans; ~~of any war or~~
8 ~~conflict in which the United States participated as a belligerent~~
9 ~~provided,~~ three of the members shall be veterans of the Vietnam
10 Conflict and one shall be a veteran of the Persian Gulf Wars. The
11 members shall be selected in the following manner: The state
12 executive board or committees of the veterans' organizations ~~in~~
13 ~~Oklahoma who have had accredited representatives at the Veterans~~
14 ~~Administration Regional Office in Oklahoma for at least ten (10)~~
15 ~~previous consecutive years~~ named in this section shall each submit
16 to the Governor of Oklahoma a list of ~~ten~~ five (5) persons qualified
17 to serve as members of the ~~War~~ Oklahoma Veterans Commission ~~of~~
18 ~~Oklahoma.~~ ~~Said~~ The list shall be submitted to the Governor not
19 later than ~~one (1) month~~ three (3) months prior to the expiration of
20 the terms of office of the members of the ~~War~~ Oklahoma Veterans
21 Commission. The Governor shall name ~~four members of the War~~
22 ~~Veterans Commission from lists submitted by the American Legion,~~
23 ~~three members of the War Veterans Commission from the lists~~
24 ~~submitted by the Veterans of Foreign Wars and two members of the War~~

1 ~~Veterans Commission from lists submitted by the Disabled American~~
2 ~~Veterans. Provided, that only those veterans' organizations~~
3 ~~recognized to present claims before the Veterans Administration, or~~
4 ~~its successor, and maintaining a headquarters within the State of~~
5 ~~Oklahoma shall be eligible to submit a list of names to the Governor~~
6 ~~as provided above~~ one member from each of the following Veterans'
7 groups: the American Legion; the Veterans of Foreign Wars; the
8 Disabled American Veterans; the Paralyzed Veterans of America; the
9 Military Order of the Purple Heart; and the National Guard
10 Association of Oklahoma. The members representing the American
11 Legion and the Paralyzed Veterans of America shall take office no
12 later than July 1, 2015. The members representing the Veterans of
13 Foreign Wars and the Order of the Purple Heart shall take office no
14 later than July 1, 2016. The members representing the Disabled
15 American Veterans and the Oklahoma National Guard shall take office
16 no later than July 1, 2017. The Governor shall also appoint three
17 members at large, one of whom may be a nonveteran and shall have a
18 family member residing in the state veteran center, one to be
19 appointed in 2015, one to be appointed in 2016, and one to be
20 appointed in 2017.

21 The executive officer of each veterans' organization operating
22 within the State of Oklahoma shall, on or before January 1 of each
23 year, submit to the Secretary of State a copy of the annual audit of
24 the organization for the immediate preceding fiscal year of the

1 organization. Such audit shall clearly show the total paid
2 membership of the organization and shall be certified to by a
3 certified public accountant. The members of the Commission shall be
4 appointed by the Governor with advice and consent of the Senate.
5 ~~Each organization qualifying for membership on the Oklahoma State~~
6 ~~War Veterans Commission shall submit a list of ten names to the~~
7 ~~Governor to choose from when,~~ and shall serve at the pleasure of the
8 Governor. When a vacancy on the ~~War~~ Oklahoma Veterans Commission
9 occurs the organization which is represented by the vacant position
10 shall submit a list of five (5) names to the Governor. The Governor
11 shall choose a replacement from that list.

12 Before any member appointed as provided herein shall enter upon
13 his or her duties as a member of the Commission he or she shall take
14 and subscribe to the oath of office as required by the Constitution
15 of this state.

16 Present members of the Commission shall continue in office until
17 the expiration of their terms and until their successors are
18 appointed and enter upon the duties of their offices. Appointments
19 shall be made for a three-year period. Any vacancy on the
20 Commission resulting from any cause shall be filled by appointment
21 by the Governor for the remainder of the term as provided in this
22 section.

23 SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 72 O.S. 2011, Section 63.3, is
24 amended to read as follows:

1 Section 63.3. The ~~War~~ Oklahoma Veterans Commission shall
2 perform all acts necessary or proper to afford emergency, temporary
3 and permanent relief and assistance to all honorably discharged ex-
4 service persons of all wars of the United States of America and to
5 their dependents, and shall perform such other duties as may be
6 prescribed by law. The Commission ~~is authorized to~~ shall promulgate
7 rules and regulations, in accordance with the Administrative
8 Procedures Act, for the operation and maintenance of the Department
9 of Veterans Affairs; provided, however, in all cases priority and
10 preference shall always be given to disabled or diseased ex-service
11 persons. The members of ~~said~~ the Commission shall be reimbursed for
12 necessary travel as provided in the State Travel Reimbursement Act.
13 In addition to its other powers and duties as herein provided, the
14 Commission shall have the following specific powers and duties which
15 shall, however, not be deemed to be exclusive:

16 1. To organize itself by the election of a Chairman, Vice
17 Chairman and Secretary, who shall perform the duties required of
18 them by the rules and regulations, but shall receive no extra
19 compensation therefor, and to provide for the time and place of
20 meetings of the Commission;

21 2. To appoint the Director of the Department of Veterans
22 Affairs and provide for the employment of all such other personnel
23 as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of Sections 63.1
24 through 63.4 of this title, and any other duties prescribed by law.

1 The salary and tenure of the Director of the Department shall be
2 determined by the Commission; and

3 3. To approve all claims or expenditures from such
4 appropriations as may be made to the Commission prior to the payment
5 thereof except as may be otherwise provided by law.

6 SECTION 4. This act shall become effective November 1, 2014.

7 Passed the Senate the 25th day of February, 2014.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

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11 Passed the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____,

12 2014.

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Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

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