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AS AMENDED

By: Simpson of the Senate

Hardin of the House

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

A. In this article, unless the context otherwise requires:

2. "Executive Director" means the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs;

3. "Program" means the Oklahoma Women Veterans Program; and

4. "Woman veteran" means a woman who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States or in the Oklahoma National Guard on federal active duty under Title 10 U.S.C., and was

1 discharged or released from that service under conditions other than
2 dishonorable.

3 B. The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs shall establish
4 the Oklahoma Women Veterans Program. The program shall be housed
5 within the office of the executive director. The mission of the
6 program shall be to ensure that women veterans in the State of
7 Oklahoma have equitable access to federal and state veterans'
8 benefits and services. The Executive Director shall designate a
9 women veterans coordinator for the State of Oklahoma.

10 1. The program shall:

- 11 a. provide assistance to the women veterans of the state
12 as provided by this section,
- 13 b. perform outreach functions to improve the awareness of
14 women veterans regarding eligibility for federal and
15 state veterans' benefits and services,
- 16 c. assess the needs of women veterans with respect to
17 benefits and services,
- 18 d. review programs, research projects, and other
19 initiatives designed to address the needs of the women
20 veterans of the state,
- 21 e. make recommendations to the Executive Director
22 regarding the improvement of benefits and services to
23 women veterans, and
24

1 f. incorporate issues concerning women veterans in
2 Department planning regarding veterans' benefits and
3 services.

4 2. The program shall advocate for women veterans and work to
5 increase public awareness about the gender-specific needs of women
6 veterans. The program shall recommend legislative initiatives and
7 the development of policies on the local, state and national levels
8 to address the issues affecting women veterans. The program shall
9 collaborate with federal, state, county and municipal governments
10 and with private organizations that provide services to women
11 veterans.

12 The program shall monitor and research issues relating to women
13 veterans. The program shall disseminate information regarding
14 opportunities for women veterans throughout the network of entities
15 with which the program collaborates.

16 Through conferences, seminars and training workshops with
17 federal, state, county and municipal governments and with private
18 organizations, the program shall provide guidance and direction to
19 women veterans who are applying for grants, benefits or services.
20 The program shall provide facilities and staff as appropriate in
21 support of the program.

22 C. On behalf of the program, the Department may:

23 1. Accept and spend funds:
24

1 a. appropriated to the Department for the operation of
2 the program, and

3 b. received from other sources, including donations and
4 grants; and

5 2. Provide matching grants to assist in the implementation of
6 the program's goals and objectives.

7 D. Not later than November 1 of each even-numbered year, the
8 Department shall submit to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor,
9 Oklahoma Veterans Commission and the Legislature a report on women
10 veterans in this state.

11 The report may be delivered electronically, and shall:

12 1. Estimate the number of women veterans in this state;

13 2. Report the number of women veterans who contact the
14 Department for assistance;

15 3. Identify the unique problems faced by women veterans; and

16 4. Recommend policy proposals, initiatives and funding levels
17 to address the problems identified.

18 E. The Oklahoma Veterans Commission is authorized to promulgate
19 rules to implement the provisions of this section.

20 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2018.

21 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
22 February 28, 2018 - DO PASS AS AMENDED
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