



## ARIZONA VETERANS' SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION

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April 14, 2022

**Douglas A. Ducey**  
Governor

**The Honorable Douglas A. Ducey**  
Governor of Arizona  
1700 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

COMMISSIONERS:

Dear Governor Ducey:

**Joan B. Mcdermott**  
Chair

Military Officers Association of America

**Eugene C. Crego**  
Vice-Chair

Unified Arizona Veterans

**Kathy Gallowitz**  
Veterans of Foreign Wars

**Wyn C. Gibbs**  
American Legion

**Lt Col Edward C. Logan**  
Air Force Association

**Major Kirk Loving**  
Military Order of the World Wars

**Mike Noble**  
Marine Corps League

**Rebecca Villalpando**  
Daisy Mountain Veterans

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners, we want to express our appreciation for the ongoing support you have demonstrated for Arizona's veterans and their families. You have worked with the Arizona Department of Veterans Services (ADVS) to champion hiring events for veterans through the AZHIRESVETS! Initiatives. In order to continue improving the quality of life for Arizona's veterans and their families. WE recommend the following:

**Military, Veteran, and Spouse Employment:** Attracting military, veteran, and spouse talent to Arizona's civilian workforce is an economic development imperative. This talent will narrow the workforce gaps created by low availability and high demand for workers and the up-skilling required of tomorrow's workers. To make this happen Arizona must continue to be proactive and creative about establishing Arizona's National Veteran Talent Pipeline.

**Survey to Identify Incentives for Small Businesses to Hire Veterans:** Many small businesses in Arizona are facing hiring issues that could be helped by hiring unemployed veterans. These small businesses lack the resources and infrastructure that many large corporations and State entities utilize. With the right State incentives, small companies could attract and hire veterans across Arizona. The Study/Survey would solicit the needs of these companies regarding sourcing, recruiting, relocation, affordable housing, and training needed to engage and employ veterans. Resulting knowledge regarding issues that deter small businesses from hiring veterans would lead to changes that would not only benefit veterans, but Arizona's small businesses, which provide half of the State's gross domestic product and the vast majority of employment opportunities for residents.

**Purple Star Schools:** Establishing Arizona's Purple Star Schools program will encourage local school systems to better support military children through school transitions and during parents' deployments – and will recognize their military service. We can do more for the nearly 35,000 military children living in Arizona, in part because the average active-duty military child enrolls in six to nine schools during their K-12 education, potentially adversely affecting their academic and social success.

**Military Medical Veterans Transition to Civilian Health-Care Industry:** Expediting the transition of military medics into civilian nurses will help relieve the nursing shortage in nearly a third of Arizona hospitals. This shortage, exacerbated by the pandemic, is projected to continue into 2030 unless more nurses are trained and retained in Arizona. On February 11, 2022 you pledged to invest \$25.7 million to expand Creighton University's Accelerated Nursing Academy. Military medics need to be a part of this and other specialized solutions that expedite nursing training to improve the quality of healthcare and the quality of life of our Veterans.

**Star Behavioral Health Provider Program:** Funding the national Star Behavioral Health Provider program will increase the access for military service members and their families to licensed behavioral health professionals who have specialized training in military culture and treatments that work for military families. This program offers no-cost trainings for practitioners and an online registry to help consumers locate them. Access to more culturally competent behavioral health providers will improve life skills and promote well-being of military-connected Arizonians which are both important suicide prevention strategies.

**Memorial Grants for Private Municipal Cemeteries:** Veterans have an option to be buried in one of the State's veteran cemeteries. Memorial grants for private municipal cemeteries for improvements to honor veterans would benefit those veterans and families who lived and are buried in private or municipal cemeteries to be closer to family and friends. Often these locations lack adequate infrastructure to perform respectful services for those who served. Grants would fund simple items like flag poles, lighting, and memorial plaques. It would be appropriate for the State to recognize these deceased veterans in a more respectful way.

Sincerely,



Joan B. McDermott  
Chairman  
Arizona Veterans Service Advisory Commission