

**Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission**  
3839 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Phoenix, AZ 85012

**July 11, 2024**

**MINUTES**

**Advisory Commissioners Present**

Philip Cushman, Chairman (in person)  
Charles Byers, Commissioner (virtual)  
Chris Gibbs, Commissioner (virtual)  
Gene Crego, Commissioner (in person)  
Kathy Galowitz, Commissioner (virtual)

**AZ Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)**

Julia Gusse, Legislative Liaison (in person)  
Lupita Santellano, Executive Assistant (in person)  
Valen Harris, Admin Assistant (virtual)

**Absent**

Dana Allmond, Cabinet Executive Officer  
Matthew Kenny, Commissioner  
Andrew Mishel, Commissioner

**Guest Speaker**

Jessica Roza, Associate Director, Echo Canyon Consulting, LLC  
Patrick Fitzhugh, Director, Regional Site Management, USAA

**Call to Order** – The Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission (AVSAC) meeting, via Google Meets: <https://meet.google.com/jgq-vm-sc-uux>; Dial-in: (US) +1 475-222-5532 PIN: 275 244 224#

Chairman Cushman called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

Chairman Cushman led the commission in the pledge of allegiance.

**Vet the Vote Presentation**

Jessica Roza presented to the commission the Vet The Vote national campaign. The presentation can be found [here](#). Vet the Vote program is a national campaign to recruit veterans and military family members to be the next generation of poll workers. Jessica Roza explained that the campaign was an overwhelming success, recruiting over 63,000 volunteers for the 2022 midterm elections. She elaborated further on how veterans and their families can fill the gap in the national shortage of poll workers, and explained how veterans have the opportunity to fulfill a civic responsibility to the election process. Overall Vet the vote campaign is allowing veterans and military members to become the next generation of poll workers.

**USAA Veteran Suicide Prevention Initiative**

Patrick Fitzhugh, Regional Site Director for USAA in Phoenix, Arizona, elaborated on USAA's Veterans Suicide prevention initiatives through the Face the Fight organization. USAA manages local grant programs. Founded by USAA, Face the Fight is a coalition of corporations, foundations, nonprofit and veteran-focused organizations joined together to raise awareness and support for veteran suicide prevention. There are 87 million dollars of committed grant funds currently and 175 national partners that have joined Face the Fight.

Face the Fight has published its first impact report. Visit <https://wefacethefight.org/> for more information.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Cushman called for a motion to approve the AVSAC meeting minutes from May 9, 2024. Commissioner Crego motioned to accept the meeting minutes. Commissioner Gibbs second the motion. The commission moved to approve the minutes unanimously; none opposed.

### **Agency Announcements and Updates**

#### **CEO's Department Update:**

#### **Veterans' Donation Fund (VDF)**

The small VDF grants reopened on July 1, 2024, and are currently accepting applications for proposals of \$4,999 or less through fiscal year 2024-2025. The small grant cycle will stay open year-round or until the \$300,000 allocated for the grant has been awarded.

#### **ASVH-Flagstaff Update**

The Flagstaff Veteran Home is scheduled to welcome its first residents in October of 2024. The Department is finished with repairs to the facility. There is some remaining cosmetic work such as drywall patching, painting, and cleaning. Also, ADVS have begun the interview process for new employees. The department recently hired a Home Administrator. The department has jobs posted to hire a Human Resources Generalist, Activities Director, Senior Social Worker, and Admissions Coordinator. More positions will be posted in the coming weeks. Please get the word out that we are hiring at the Flagstaff Home and across our agency.

#### **Missing in America Project Fall Ceremonies**

The purpose of the Missing in America Project is to **1)** locate, identify, and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of American Veterans through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations and **2)** provide honor and respect to those who have served this country by securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes. Save the date if you are in northern Arizona or the Marana/Tucson area. The Missing In America Project will hold their fall interment ceremonies in October. The ceremony at the Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery-Marana will be held on Saturday, October 5, 2024. The ceremony at the Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery-Camp Navajo will be held on Thursday, October 10, 2024.

#### **Wreaths Across America**

Wreath sponsorships for the December Wreaths Across America ceremonies are open. When you become a sponsor, the money you give goes towards providing a beautiful live wreath for the cemeteries. One wreath sponsorship is just \$17. National Wreaths Across America Day is Saturday, December 14, 2024.

- o Southern Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery- Sierra Vista needs 2,712 wreaths
- o Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery-Marana needs 1,637 wreaths
- o Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery -Camp Navajo needs 287 wreaths

To sponsor a wreath visit, go to [wreathsacrossamerica.org](http://wreathsacrossamerica.org).

### Upcoming Veteran StandDowns

- White Mountain StandDown
  - Saturday, August 17, 2024, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
  - Show Low City Gym – 760 E. White Mountain Boulevard in Show Low, Arizona
  
- Williams StandDown
  - Friday, September 13, 2024, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM
  - Williams Recreation Center – 300 W. Railroad Avenue in Williams, Arizona
  
- Yavapai County StandDown
  - Friday and Saturday, September 20 and 21, 2024
  - US Vets- 1040 Whipple Street in Prescott, Arizona
  - Additional details about this StandDown to come

### Veteran Benefits Counselors (VBCs)

Let our VBCs advocate for you in your pursuit of your federal and state Veteran benefits. Veterans and family members are able to schedule in person or virtual appointments on

<https://dvs.az.gov/services/veteran-benefits-counselors-vbcs>.

Cabinet Executive Officer's Digital Business Card, <https://blinq.me/5KHwLnaiEvq8GpC9eGGg>.

### **Legislative Liaison Update**

Julia Gusse provided a powerpoint presentation, found [here](#). Julia will provide an update on Open Meeting Law at the next commission meeting.

### **New Business**

**Open Meeting Law** - Commissioner Chris Gibbs provided a brief Open Meeting Law training.

### **Old Business**

**Discuss Annual Letter to the Governor** - Chairman Cushman began a draft of the letter to the Governor. The first issue he would like to address in the letter is the dwindling number of commissioners. Commissioner Gallowitz would like the onboarding process with Boards and Commissions expedited. The commission would also like clarification on what justifies as a quorum when there are nine members to a commission. The second issue is the Veteran treatment courts. Chairman Cushman, Commissioner Gallowitz, and Commissioner Crego will work together in a subcommittee to draft the letter to the Governor.

**Strategic Policy Objective Reassessment** - Tabled until September 12, 2024. Commissioner Gallowitz suggested CEO Allmond and staff review and provide data to update the strategic policy objective.

**Commission Fundraising and Awards Updates** - Tabled until September 12, 2024.

**September Commission Meeting Planning**- Chairman Cushman will draft a memorandum for the September 12, 2024, commission meeting in Prescott, Arizona, and provide it to ADVS to distribute to the commission. Chairman Cushman requested suggestions of locations the commission would like to visit while in Prescott, Arizona, as well as people they would like to speak with. The commission would like to visit the Northern Arizona VA Healthcare System (NAVAHCS), and suggested Joan McDermott and Judge Kay be the guest speakers. Chairman Cushman suggested the commission should arrive in Prescott on September 11th, to take part in the Patriot day activities. He also mentioned the commission could attend the William's stand down, which is taking place September 13, 2024. Chairman Cushman mentioned he would like to hold a commander's call the morning of September 12th, 2024, and ask the Commanders what their thoughts are on gun violence. He would also like to pose the same question to the business and city managers during a lunch meeting and the elected officials during dinner.

**Commission Vacancies**- There are two vacancies in the Commission, one vacancy in the Northern region and one in the Southern region. Chairman Cushman encouraged the Commission to reach out to Veterans they believe would be interested in applying to be on the Commission. Candidates should submit their packets to Boards and Commissions as soon as possible. Commissioners Gallowitz, Crego and Gibbs have not heard back regarding their commission renewals.

### **Outreach Activities for the Commission-**

Commissioner Gallowitz

- Organized and hosted a Veteran hiring panel discussion for the Glendale Chamber of Commerce in June 2024
- Hosted monthly military ministry VetConnect and Women Who Lead meetings

Commissioner Crego

- Attended "The Drop Zone" on July 2, 2024. It was sponsored by Arizona U.S. House of Representative Andy Biggs. There was a large turn out with many vendors to assist veterans, families, and caregivers
- Worked with SpeedPro in designing a banner and stand to use at events to recognize and help the Commission and its mission

### **For the Good of the Order**

**Action Item Recap-** The commission did not have time to go over the action items.

**Open Floor for Comments**

None.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Cushman called for a motion to adjourn the Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission Meeting. Commissioner Crego motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:53 am.

# VET THE VOTE

Presented By: Jessica Roza

# VET THE VOTE

A national campaign to recruit **veterans**  
**and military family members** to become  
the **next generation of poll workers**

# Why Veterans and Military Families?

- 43 million+
- Proven commitment to country and service
- Hold the trust of their fellow citizens & cut across partisanship
- Respected leaders and public servants
- Diverse population, in all 50 states
- Well networked, easily mobilized, and when called, they stand up to serve

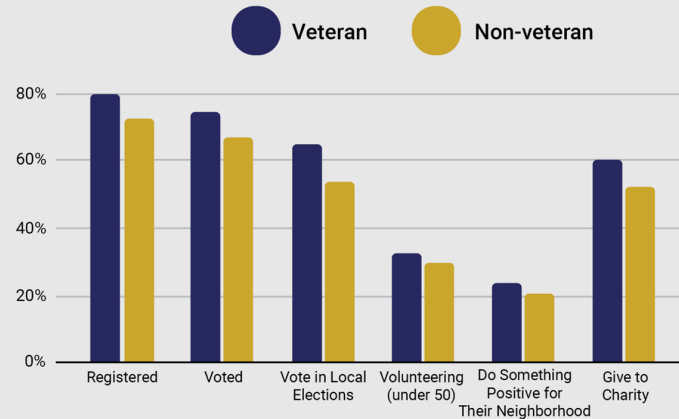


# Why Veterans and Military Families?

## Proven commitment to country and service

- All-volunteer force
- Swore an oath

### Veterans Civic Health Comparisons



# Why Veterans and Military Families?

## Hold the Trust of Their Fellow Citizens

AMERICANS WHO:

RATE THE ARMED FORCES AS TRUSTWORTHY

69%

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN VETERANS TO DO  
WHAT'S RIGHT FOR AMERICA

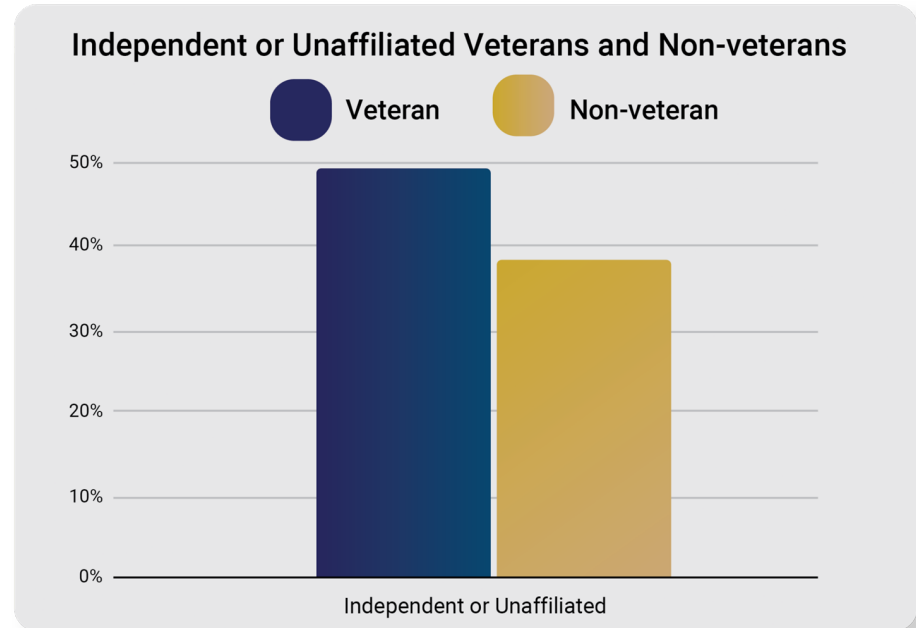
70%

BELIEVE VETERANS ARE ROLE MODELS FOR  
GOOD CITIZENSHIP

80%

# Why Veterans and Military Families?

## Cut across partisanship



# Why Veterans and Military Families?

## Respected Leaders and Public Servants

**6.2%**

PERCENTAGE OF THE US ADULT POPULATION THAT ARE VETERANS

**18%**

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THAT ARE VETERANS

**32%**

PERCENT OF VETERANS WORKING IN PUBLIC SERVICE & CHARITY

# Why Veterans and Military Families?

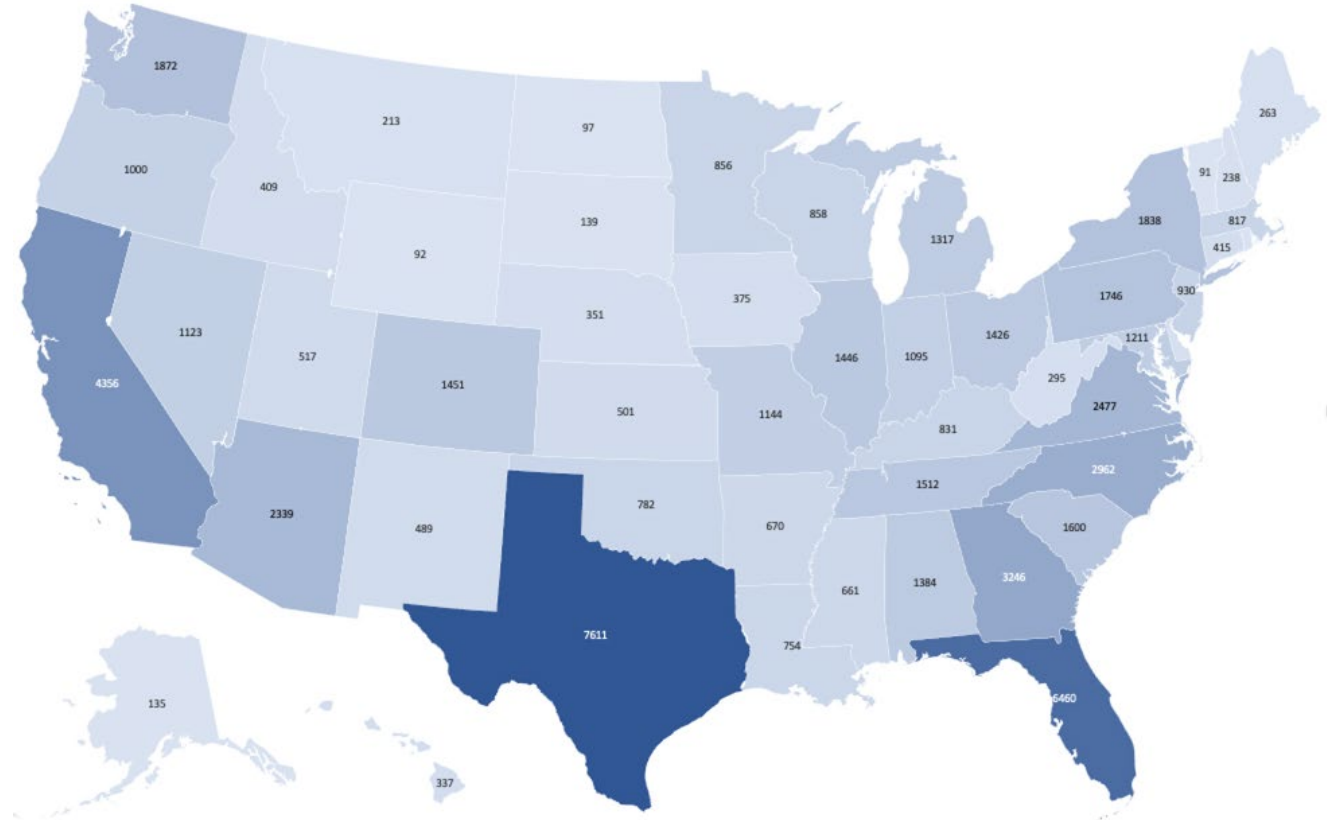
Well networked, easily mobilized,  
and stand up to serve when called

- Thousands of VMF service & engagement organizations + the VA
- 2022 Vet the Vote case study = 63,000 mobilized in five months

# Why Poll Workers?

- 2022 National Shortage: 125,000 poll workers
- What's driving a shortage?
  - Aging out
  - Covid
  - Polarization
- What does a shortage affect?
  - **Fewer polling stations**
  - **Longer wait times**
  - **Logistical inefficiencies**

# More than **63,000** veterans and military family members answered the call to serve in 2022



Note: excludes volunteers from Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and Guam

**VET** THE  
**VOTE**

**ANSWER THE  
CALL TO SERVE,  
AGAIN**



**VOTE  
VOLUNTEER.  
SUPPORT THOSE WHO DO.**

Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoZyMTq2Qmk>



# What made '22 Vet the Vote Successful

- Strong National coalition.
- Unifying, positive message.
- Clear call to action.
- Leveraged the strengths of the VMF community.

**VET THE  
VOTE**

# '22 Volunteer Survey

- 93% plan on serving again.
- 96% would recommend.
- 93% spoke with other VMF about the experience.
- Serving as or training to be a poll worker overwhelmingly increased trust in the elections (80%).

VET THE  
VOTE

# The Vet the Vote National Coalition

## And we continue to grow!



# VET THE VOTE National Goals 2024:

**>100K**

VMF recruited

**50M**

Americans reached

## INFORM

Ensure that the Veterans & Military Families are the most pro-democracy, informed citizens about voting in every state. Creating state-based partnerships to expand voting education for veterans and military families along with voter registration.

## RECRUIT

Recruit more Veterans & Military Families to be Poll Workers to ensure the America has enough well-trained volunteers for smooth 2024 elections.

## SPREAD TRUST

Spread the message to all Americans that Veterans & Military Families are serving again across the country as Poll Workers and increase trust in our elections through this new norm.

# Vet the Vote Arizona

- Statewide awareness, education + engagement.
- Arizona Partner Coalition.
- Voter registration + voter education drives.
- Poll Worker Recruitment in all 15 Counties.
- Over 7,000 recruited since 2022!



## Unique Recruitment Website

- ✓ Vet the Vote will track & promote recruiting results for each coalition member.

## Civic Education

- ✓ Programming & educational opportunities for your membership, such as training on election processes & tours of elections centers.

## In- Person Participation Opportunities

- ✓ Attend convenings/events focused on veteran & military family patriotic participation in civic life.

## Promotional Opportunities

- ✓ Cross-promotional opportunities for your organization & your programs.

**VET**<sup>THE</sup>  
**VOTE**

**Joining the  
Arizona Partner  
Coalition**

**What does Vet  
the Vote  
provide to  
coalition  
members?**

## Virtual Coalition Member Meetings

- ✓ Attend & participate in quarterly coalition meetings (monthly during election cycles).
- ✓ Promote your organization & network with like - minded organizations.

## Promote Engagement, Recruitment & Trust

- ✓ Encourage your members & broader network to register to vote & sign up as poll workers.
- ✓ Participate in virtual or in -person recruitment efforts: include on website & newsletters, share on social media, or co-host an event.
- ✓ Instill confidence in & encourage all Americans to support America's elections & the dedicated public servants that officiate them.

**VET**<sup>THE</sup>  
**VOTE**

**Joining the  
Arizona Partner  
Coalition**

**What does  
becoming part  
of the Vet The  
Vote Coalition  
involve?**

VET THE  
VOTE

# ARIZONA VETERANS TOUR MARICOPA COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICE



VOTE  
VOLUNTEER.  
SUPPORT THOSE WHO DO.



Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cLJ3VP8cIM>



# 3 Steps To Become A Poll Worker

sign up to serve your community today!

1. Sign up at [vetthe.vote](http://vetthe.vote) and ensure you complete your application.
2. When you hear back from your state office, begin your training.
3. Execute your civic duty (and have fun doing it!)
4. Get paid for your service!

*Bonus!*

**VET THE VOTE**



[www.vetthe.vote](http://www.vetthe.vote)



Register to vote



Become a  
Poll Worker



Check voter  
registration status

# Arizona - Important Dates for the Primary Election

**Jun. 15**

Military and  
Overseas  
Ballots Mailed

**Jul. 1**

Voter  
Registration  
Deadline

**Jul. 3**

Early ballots  
mailed and  
early voting  
begins

**Jul. 19**

Last day to re-  
quest an early  
ballot

**Jul. 23**

Last Day to  
Mail Back  
Your Ballot

**Jul. 26**

Last Day to  
Vote Early In  
Person

**Jul. 30**

Election Day!

Arizona will hold a Primary Election on July 30. All registered voters may vote in this election, which will determine the candidates from each party that will be on the General Election Ballot in November. Voters registered as Independent or Party Not Declared must specify which party's ballot they would like to vote.

# Arizona - Important Dates for the General Election

**Sept. 21**

Military and  
Overseas Ballots  
Mailed

**Oct. 7**

Voter  
Registration  
Deadline

**Oct. 9**

Ballots Mailed &  
Drop Boxes  
Available

**Oct. 25**

Last day to re-  
quest an early  
ballot

**Oct. 29**

Last Day to Mail  
Back Your Ballot

**Nov. 5**

Election Day!

Arizona will hold a General Election on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. All registered voters are eligible to participate in this election. This election includes federal, state, county and local offices that are up for election. The general election is the final election held between nominees of various parties, as well as non-partisan races, ballot propositions, and initiatives.

# Questions?

[Jessica.Roza@wetheveterans.us](mailto:Jessica.Roza@wetheveterans.us)

The logo for the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services. The word "ARIZONA" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a red circle containing a white outline of the state of Arizona.

ARIZONA

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE JULY 11, 2024

JULIA R. GUSSE, LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

# Adjourned; 160 Session Days



**The Arizona House of Representatives adjourned sine die at 9:55 PM on Saturday, June 15th, 2024.**

**The Arizona Senate adjourned sine die at 9:46 PM on Saturday, June 15, 2024.**

# 2024 Fifty Sixth Legislative Second Regular Session

**Governor Signed 4 Veteran/Military Related Bills**

**Governor VETOED 2 Veteran/Military Related Bills**

**1660 Bills Posted**

**313 Bills Passed**

**59 Bills Vetoed (as of 6/17 am)**

**202 Bills Signed (as of 6/17 am)**

**43 Veteran/Military Related Bills Introduced this Session**

# HB2246 Purple Star School Program

The Purple Star School program established within the Department of Education is to identify schools in the state that provide transition support to military students and their families. Includes any school in the state that offers instruction to students K-12 may apply to the Department to participate.



**Signed by Governor Hobbs**  
**04/08/2024**





# SB2304 Buffalo Soldiers Arizona Territory Monument

Pursuant to section 41-1363, subsection A, Arizona Revised Statutes, this act authorizes the department of administration to provide for the placement in Wesley Bolin plaza of a memorial dedicated to the commemoration of Buffalo Soldiers. Signed by Governor Hobbs on 03/29/2024.



<https://www.azfamily.com/2024/04/06/buffalo-soldiers-monument-be-built-phoenix-thanks-part-mesa-couple/>

# SB2548 Military Installation General Plans; land

Each planning agency shall prepare and the governing body of each municipality shall adopt a comprehensive, long-range general plan for the development of the municipality. The planning agency shall coordinate the production of its general plan with the creation of the state land department conceptual land use plans under title 37, chapter 2, article 10 5.1 and shall cooperate with the state land department regarding integrating the conceptual state land use plans into the municipality's general land use plan. The general plan shall include provisions that identify changes or modifications to the plan that constitute amendments and major amendments.

**Signed by Governor Hobbs on 03/29/24**



## **HB2818** Display of flags; notification; state agencies; state buildings; military service members

All state agencies, on notification from the Governor of the death of a military service member of the United States Armed Forces who was killed in action and who claimed this state as the military service member's home of record or who was stationed in this state, shall fly all 10 flags displayed on or in front of all state buildings at half-staff. **Signed 4/10/24.**



# House “Voting” Bills - **VETOED**



HB2393 Presidential preference; parties; voting methods

**VETOED** by Governor Hobbs on 4/10/24; Political party shall provide for a method of voting that allows all of the following to participate; persons who are uniformed services or overseas citizens.

HB2404 Voter Registration Cards; mailing information

**VETOED** by Governor Hobbs on 4/10/24; The County Recorder shall not provide an initial or updated voter registration card to a person whose mailing address is outside this state except for; persons who are on active duty military service outside this state and their family members.

## HB2782/Striker H.1238 Homeless shelter “Drug Free Zone”

**Update; Moved on 6/14 but did not come out of “Rules”, we may see this return next session.**

AZDVS and the Arizona Housing Coalition is opposing this bill due to the “barriers” for serving homeless veterans. Identifies Homeless service providers, Drug free homeless services zone. (This includes HB2279; addiction counseling).



# Moved to Governor's Office (6/14 -6/15)

- ▶ SB1174; Tuition, Family, Posttraumatic, Stress, Suicide (Signed by Governor)
- ▶ SB1570; Psilocybin services; regulation; licensure (VETOED)
- ▶ SJR1001; Private property; sale; veterans affairs (723 East Devonshire Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona)



# Appropriation Bill (SB1735/HB2897)

## **Bill Title: General appropriations act; 2024-2025**

- ▶ Veteran Substance Abuse treatment grants (page 36)
- ▶ Department Veteran Services 24-25 appropriations (pages 99-100)
- ▶ Lump Sum Reductions FY 2024-25 (page 112)
- ▶ General Council Veteran Services (page 122)

**Passed and signed by the Governor**

# Amendments to SB1735/HB2897

- ▶ 10. Stipulates that the \$5,000,000 from opioid claims-related monies in the Veterans Substance Abuse Treatments Grants line item may only be used for approved purposes as defined in a court order, a settlement agreement or the one Arizona Distribution of Opioid Settlement Funds Agreement that is entered into by this state and other parties to the opioid litigation.
- ▶ 21. Exempts the FY 2024 \$5,000,000 appropriation for psilocybin research from lapsing.
- ▶ 74. Appropriates \$500,000 from the state GF in FY 2025 to the Department of Veteran Services to distribute to veterans center that provides referral services for employment and job training, housing and utility assistance.



# Appropriation Bill (SB1737/HB2899)

**Appropriation reduction; fiscal year 2021-2022; Appropriation; fiscal year 2027-2028; Department of Veterans' Services; veterans' home facility; site selection; review; exemption**

**A. Notwithstanding any other law, the following amounts are reduced from appropriations made to the following state agency in fiscal year 2021-2022 by Laws 2021, chapter 406, section 29 for the following project:**

**B. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES Veterans' home facility \$(25,000,000) Fund source: State general fund \$(25,000,000)**

**C. The sum of \$25,000,000 is appropriated from the state general fund in fiscal year 2027-2028 to the department of veterans' services to construct and establish a veterans' home facility in the northwestern portion of this state.**