



Dear Friend:

Our state's veterans have earned a special level of respect and honor for their service to our great nation. Pennsylvania has one of the nation's largest veteran populations, and it is important that we ensure their needs are met. The General Assembly passed a number of bills of interest to veterans during the 2009-10 legislative session, and I have included information on several of these measures in this legislative update. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have. Your input is always welcomed and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Senator Richard Alloway II

Senate Passes Legislation to Promote Veteran-Owned Businesses

The Senate approved legislation in September that would encourage state agencies to contract with small businesses that are owned by veterans.

Senate Bill 162 would require the Department of General Services to set an annual contracting goal of not less than 5 percent for contracts with small businesses owned by veterans. Under the bill, the Department of General Services would provide staff and training to help veteran-owned businesses learn how to apply

for state contracts. The department would also compile and make available lists of veteran-owned businesses to state agencies to encourage procurement.

While I am disappointed that the House of Representatives did not allow a vote on this measure, I am hopeful that we can see similar legislation signed into law during the 2011-12 legislative session to give veterans the resources, tools and contacts to help their business thrive.



General Assembly Extends Military Family Relief Program

I was pleased to support passage of a new law earlier this year that will extend a program that serves as a vital safety net for members of the military and their families.

The Military Family Relief Fund provides grants to military members who have a direct and immediate financial need due to the sudden loss of income directly related to their service or an emergency need for child care, food, shelter or other necessities. The program also provides emergency funding for travel and lodging in the

event of the death or serious illness of a spouse, parent, sibling or child. Act 9 of 2010, which passed the House and Senate with unanimous support, will extend this program until 2016. The law also expands the program to members of the Pennsylvania National Guard and their families.

The program is funded by voluntary contributions made through a check-off box on state income tax returns and private contributions.



Other Actions Taken by the General Assembly

In addition to these measures, the following bills of interest to veterans were introduced during the 2009-10 legislative session:

- Act 57 of 2010, legislation signed into law that allows community colleges and state universities to offer in-state tuition rates for military personnel, their spouses and dependents,
- Act 13 of 2010, legislation signed into law that prohibits limitations on the wearing of military uniforms on school grounds,
- Senate Bill 213, legislation passed by the Senate that would allow Pennsylvania to form compacts with other states to remove barriers to education due to frequent moves, and
- Senate Bills 301 and 302, legislation passed by the Senate to reduce the amount of time a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard must serve overseas in order to qualify for a reduced-fee fishing license or hunting license.

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