

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 178

2 INTRODUCED BY D. BEDEY

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO COUNTY AND MULTICOUNTY
 5 VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICES; CLARIFYING GRANT DISPERSAL; AMENDING SECTION 10-2-116, MCA;
 6 AMENDING SECTION 6, CHAPTER 462, LAWS OF 2009; REPEALING SECTION 6, CHAPTER 462, LAWS
 7 OF 2019; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE."

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9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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11 **Section 1.** Section 10-2-116, MCA, is amended to read:12 **"10-2-116. (Temporary) Funding county veterans' service offices -- grant -- conditions and**13 **reporting.** (1) (a) The board shall administer a grant program and award block grants to county and14 multicounty veterans' service offices from funding appropriated by the legislature for the purposes of this
15 section.

16 (b) The amount paid to each county or multicounty veterans' service office is calculated by multiplying
 17 the total annual appropriation for the grant program by the ratio of the number of veterans residing in a county
 18 or counties serviced by a county or multicounty veterans' service office to the total number of veterans residing
 19 in all counties participating in the grant program and rounding to the nearest whole dollar amount. The number
 20 of veterans residing in a county is determined using the most recent data reported by the U.S. department of
 21 veterans affairs.

22 (c) After the board determines that a county or multicounty veterans' service office has met the
 23 eligibility requirements provided for in subsection (2), the board shall distribute the amount paid as calculated in
 24 subsection (1)(b) to the county or multicounty veterans' service office as a block grant by August 31 of each
 25 STATE fiscal year.

26 ~~(e)~~(d) The board shall ensure that all funds are distributed to eligible county or multicounty veterans'
 27 service offices.

28 (2) To receive a grant, a county or multicounty veterans' service office shall:

1 (a) submit a grant application provided by the board that provides evidence that the requirements in
 2 this subsection (2) have been met;

3 (B) SUBMIT ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTS TO THE BOARD BY JULY 15 OF EACH STATE FISCAL
 4 YEAR;

5 ~~(a)(b)~~ (C) have established county funding as provided for in 15-10-425 or through other means
 6 provided by law;

7 ~~(b)(c)~~ (D) have established a physical office at an accessible location where veterans and their family
 8 members may visit in person;

9 ~~(c)(d)~~ (E) provide for at least one veterans' service officer;

10 ~~(d)(e)~~ (F) ensure that each county veterans' service officer meets the qualifications and requirements
 11 of 10-2-115; and

12 ~~(e)(f)~~ (G) ensure that all of the grant money received pursuant to this section is spent in support of
 13 veterans and their family members and may not be used for any other purpose.

14 (3) If the requirements of subsection (2) are met, a grant must be awarded:

15 (a) to a county veterans' service office established before July 1, 2019;

16 (b) to a new county veterans' service office during the biennium immediately following the date it was
 17 established; and

18 (c) each subsequent fiscal year a county veterans' service office continues to meet the requirements
 19 in subsection (2).

20 (4) The amount of grant money a county veterans' service office receives is in proportion to the
 21 number of veterans residing in the county or counties served by that office as specified in subsection (1)(b).

22 (5) A county veterans' service office that receives a grant shall report data and information to the
 23 department at the end of the fiscal year in which a grant was dispersed. Reported data and information ~~shall~~
 24 must encompass the following:

25 (a) disability benefit claims data and information, including but not limited to:

26 (i) the number of claim forms submitted by the county veterans' service office to the U.S. department
 27 of veterans affairs; and

28 (ii) the number of notices of disagreement or appeals submitted through the county veterans' service

1 office to the U.S. department of veterans affairs;

2 (b) the number of medical enrollments submitted by the county veterans' service office to the U.S.
3 department of veterans affairs;

4 (c) the number of veterans' education enrollments submitted by the county veterans' service office to
5 the U.S. department of veterans affairs;

6 (d) the number of county and state burial benefits processed by the county veterans' service office;
7 and

8 (e) a description of any other ancillary services provided to county veterans, such as transportation
9 services, mental health services, homeless services, crisis intervention, and military records requests.

10 (~~Terminates June 30, 2023 -- sec. 6, Ch. 462, L. 2019.~~)"

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12 ~~NEW SECTION. Section 2. Repealer. Section 6, Chapter 462, Laws of 2019, is repealed.~~

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14 **SECTION 2.** SECTION 6, CHAPTER 462, LAWS OF 2019, IS AMENDED TO READ:

15 "**Section 6. Termination.** [~~This act~~ SECTION 2] terminates June 30, 2023."

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17 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2021.

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19 NEW SECTION. SECTION 4. TERMINATION. [THIS ACT] TERMINATES JUNE 30, 2023.

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