STATE OF NEW YORK

791

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 8, 2025

Introduced by Sen. FERNANDEZ -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the veterans' services law, in relation to the Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immigrant family legacy program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 29-b of the veterans' services law, as added by a chapter of the laws of 2024 amending the veterans' services law, the military law, and the executive law relating to establishing the Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immigrant family legacy program, as proposed in legislative bills numbers S. 8119-C and A. 8837-C, is renumbered section 29-d and is amended to read as follows:

§ 29-d. Staff sergeant Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immigrant family legacy program. 1. For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Uniformed service member" shall mean a member of the army, navy, air force, space force, marine corps, coast guard, public health service commissioned corps, or national oceanic and atmospheric administration commissioned officer corps serving on active duty.

(b) "The program" shall mean the staff sergeant Alex R. Jimenez military immigrant family legacy program.

(c) "Liaison" shall mean an employee of the office for new Americans designated by the director of the office for new Americans, an employee of the division of military and naval affairs designated by the adjutant general, [~~or~~] **and an employee of** the department designated by the commissioner, to serve as a military immigrant family legacy program liaison pursuant to subdivision three of this section.

(d) "Veteran" shall have the same meaning as such term is defined in section one of this article and shall also include any veteran with a qualifying condition, as defined in section one of this article, and has

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from such service, or is a discharged LGBT veteran, as defined in section one of this article, and has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from such service.

(e) "Intended recipients" shall mean uniformed service members, veterans, reserve component members and their [~~family members~~] spouse, domestic partner, mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, mother through adoption, father through adoption, or children, stepchildren, or adopted children. The term "intended recipients" shall also include the next-of-kin of an eligible uniformed service member, veteran or reserve component member who died as a result of injury or disease incurred in or aggravated by their service in the uniformed services, making a request for the grant of posthumous U.S. citizenship on behalf of such uniformed service member, veteran or reserve component member.

(f) "Reserve component members" shall mean those serving in the army reserve, navy reserve, marine corps reserve, the army national guard, the air national guard, or reserve corps of the public health service during the time the unit was federally recognized as a reserve component.

2. There is hereby established within the office for new Americans the staff sergeant Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immigrant family legacy program. The commissioner and adjutant general shall designate one or more staff as liaisons to the office for new Americans who shall refer any intended recipient[~~, alive or deceased,~~] in need of assistance with an immigration matter to the office for new Americans. The office for new Americans shall designate one or more staff to be liaisons with the department and the division of military and naval affairs who shall [~~receive and~~] coordinate such referrals from the department and the division of military and naval affairs and [~~secure legal assistance under existing office for new Americans legal services for intended recipients~~] ensure the intended recipient is referred to existing office for new Americans programs, including, but not limited to, immigration legal service programs delivered by partnering community organization and immigration counsel. The primary purpose of the program shall be to assist intended recipients to secure legal immigration status in the United States, including but not limited to, citizenship.

3. The [~~duties of the liaisons at the~~] office for new Americans shall [~~include~~] have the responsibility to:

(a) [~~assisting~~] refer intended recipients[~~, who may qualify for adjustment of status, special immigration status through the federal Parole in Place program authorized by section 1758 of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, or any other sort of immigration relief, including relief that can lead to citizenship, in securing legal representation or consultation by qualified immigration attorneys or duly authorized board of immigration appeals representatives as may be necessary to obtain such relief~~] in matters related to immigration status, to service providers.

(b) [~~serving~~] serve as liaison [~~between~~] for the department and the division of military and naval affairs, [~~the United States citizenship and immigration services, the United States immigration and customs enforcement, the United States department of veterans affairs, the United States department of defense,~~] local veterans' service agencies, state agencies, community groups, advocates, and other veterans and military organizations and interested parties for the purpose of coordinating efforts to provide access to immigration [~~relief~~] services to intended recipients as specified in paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

(c) [~~consulting with qualified immigration attorneys or duly authorized board of immigration appeals approved representatives to facilitate such coordination with the United States citizenship and immigration services or other appropriate agency.~~

~~(d) advocating for intended recipients.~~

~~(e) developing and maintaining a clearinghouse for~~] maintain a toll-free, multi-lingual hotline and website for purposes including, but not limited to, disseminating information and resources relating to the program as well as other federal, state, local and non-profit programs that may offer assistance to intended recipients in immigration matters.

[~~(f) promoting events and activities that educate and assist intended recipients, including but not limited to, veteran human rights conferences, veterans benefit and resources events.~~

~~(g) developing information to be made available to~~]

(d) coordinate with the department and the division of military and naval affairs and otherwise marshal the resources of the state to serve the needs of intended recipients.

(e) share information about the program with congressionally chartered veterans' organizations, and local veterans' service agencies [~~to provide a general overview of the program, including but not limited to, its purpose and the eligibility requirements for adjustment of status, citizenship, or any other form of available relief.~~

~~(h) preparing yearly reports on topics, including but not limited to, the demographics of intended recipients residing in the state, including the number of such intended recipients by county, an estimate of how many may be eligible for naturalization, and the unique needs of the intended recipients within New York state to the commissioner, the adjutant general of the division of military and naval affairs and the office for new Americans~~].

4. The liaisons appointed pursuant to subdivision two of this section shall jointly [~~submit a~~] report the number of intended recipients referred to the office for new Americans through the program to the commissioner[~~, the adjutant general and the director of the office for new Americans~~] on January first each year following the first full year after the effective date of this section. [~~Such report shall include, but not be limited to, a description and evaluation of the program and the liaisons' activities for the preceding calendar year, and the number of intended recipients aided by the program, as well as any recommendations for future programmatic changes.~~] The [~~director of the office for new Americans~~] commissioner shall submit the report to the governor and the legislature [~~in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (n) of subdivision five of section ninety-four-b of the executive law~~] by March first of each year.

5. For the purposes of this program, personally identifying information provided by intended recipients shall not be retained, disclosed, disseminated, or otherwise published or made available by the department, the division of military and naval affairs, or the office for new Americans.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a chapter of the laws of 2024 amending the veterans' services law, the military law, and the executive law relating to establishing the Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immigrant family legacy program, as proposed in legislative bills numbers S. 8119-C and A. 8837-C, takes effect.