

STATE OF NEW YORK

4551

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 16, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. MILLER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to creating a veterans' clearinghouse for purposes of identifying veterans eligible for benefits

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

Section 1. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 355-a to read as follows:

§ 355-a. Veterans' clearinghouse. 1. The division is hereby directed to create and maintain a centralized database, to be known as the veterans' clearinghouse, which shall collect information relating to the identification of veterans residing in the state and the state or federal benefits received or available to veterans so identified.

2. The division shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the United States department of veterans' affairs that allows for the sharing of information relating to the identification of veterans residing in the state who are receiving or eligible for federal veterans' benefits.

3. All departments, divisions, bureaus, boards, commissions and agencies of the state and political subdivisions thereof, which provide assistance or other benefits to individuals, when the provision of such assistance or benefits is related to the recipient's veteran status or military experiences, shall request that such assisted persons provide information with regard to their veteran status and military experiences and shall report such information to the division for inclusion in the veterans' clearinghouse. Such information sharing shall be for the purposes of allowing the division to (a) examine whether any such veterans are eligible for federal or state benefits, and (b) formulate policies that assist such veterans in obtaining such benefits. Individuals identifying themselves as veterans shall be advised that the division

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

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1 and local veterans' service agencies established pursuant to section
2 three hundred fifty-seven of this article provide assistance to veterans
3 regarding benefits under federal and state law.

4 4. The departments, divisions, bureaus, boards, commissions and agen-
5 cies of the state and political subdivisions thereof, which are required
6 to report information to the division for inclusion in the veterans'
7 clearinghouse pursuant to subdivision three of this section, shall
8 submit such a report on a quarterly basis in a form and manner to be
9 determined by the state director.

10 5. The departments, divisions, bureaus, boards, commissions and agen-
11 cies of the state and political subdivisions thereof, which are required
12 to report information to the division for inclusion in the veterans'
13 clearinghouse pursuant to subdivision three of this section, shall
14 include, but shall not be limited to, those departments, divisions,
15 bureaus, boards, commissions and agencies of the state and political
16 subdivisions thereof, which are subject to the requirements of section
17 three hundred fifty-four-a of this article, and:

18 (a) the division of military and naval affairs;

19 (b) local assessor units, which shall be required to report informa-
20 tion regarding owners of real property who are recipients of the real
21 property tax exemption provided by section four hundred fifty-eight or
22 four hundred fifty-eight-a of the real property tax law;

23 (c) the higher education services corporation, which shall be required
24 to report information regarding the identity of any recipients of the
25 veterans' tuition award provided by section six hundred sixty-nine-a of
26 the education law;

27 (d) the board of visitors of each state veterans' home, which shall be
28 required to report information regarding the identity of residents of
29 each home admitted pursuant to section twenty-six hundred thirty-two of
30 the public health law; and

31 (e) county and city veterans' service agencies.

32 6. Information regarding veterans' status and military service
33 provided by assisted persons solely to implement this section shall be
34 protected as personal confidential information under article six-A of
35 the public officers law against disclosure of confidential material, and
36 used only to assist in the diagnosis, treatment, assessment and handling
37 of the veteran's problems within the agency requesting such information
38 and in referring the veteran to the division for information and assist-
39 ance with regard to benefits and entitlements under federal and state
40 law.

41 7. The division shall collect and maintain information concerning such
42 veterans in accordance with law and the federal Health Insurance Porta-
43 bility and Accountability Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-191) (HIPAA), as amended
44 from time to time, or regulations adopted thereunder.

45 8. The state director shall promulgate rules and regulations to
46 provide for the implementation of the provisions of this section.

47 § 2. Section 354-a of the executive law, as amended by chapter 602 of
48 the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

49 § 354-a. Information on status of veterans receiving assistance.
50 Departments, divisions, bureaus, boards, commissions and agencies of the
51 state and political subdivisions thereof, which provide assistance,
52 treatment, counseling, care, supervision or custody in service areas
53 involving health, mental health, family services, criminal justice or
54 employment, including but not limited to the office of addiction
55 services and supports, office of mental health, office of probation and
56 correctional alternatives, office of children and family services,

1 office of temporary and disability assistance, department of health,
2 department of labor, local workforce investment boards, office for
3 people with developmental disabilities, and department of corrections
4 and community supervision, shall request assisted persons to provide
5 information with regard to their veteran status and military experi-
6 ences. Individuals identifying themselves as veterans, including indi-
7 viduals requesting and obtaining a veterans notation on their driver's
8 license or non-driver identification card pursuant to sections four
9 hundred ninety and five hundred two of the vehicle and traffic law,
10 shall be advised that the division of veterans' services and local
11 veterans' service agencies established pursuant to section three hundred
12 fifty-seven of this article provide assistance to veterans regarding
13 benefits under federal and state law. Information regarding veterans
14 status and military service provided by assisted persons solely to
15 implement this section shall be protected as personal confidential
16 information under article six-A of the public officers law against
17 disclosure of confidential material, and used only to assist in the
18 diagnosis, treatment, assessment and handling of the veteran's problems
19 within the agency requesting such information and in referring the
20 veteran to the division of veterans' services for information and
21 assistance with regard to benefits and entitlements under federal and
22 state law. Information provided to the division pursuant to this
23 section shall be included in the veterans' clearinghouse established
24 pursuant to section three hundred fifty-five-a of this article.

25 § 3. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall
26 have become a law; provided, however, that the amendments to section
27 354-a of the executive law made by section two of this act shall not
28 affect the repeal of such section and shall be deemed repealed there-
29 with. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of
30 any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on
31 its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before
32 such effective date.