



January 23, 2012

The Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is one of the 23 Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) in the Commonwealth making up the Joint Leadership Council (JLC) of Veterans Service Organizations. The membership in Virginia of these 23 VSOs is over 260,000. The JLC was created by Virginia statute in 2003 and has its board appointed by the Governor for three year terms.

During each session of the Virginia General Assembly VCOC advocates various issues adopted by the JLC. This year issues adopted by the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) have been included in the full package of supported issues. In summary these include.

### **1. Legislative**

Unclaimed Cremated Remains of Veterans: Goal is to facilitate the honorable burial of the unclaimed cremated remains (cremains) of Virginia veterans in a state veterans cemetery by requiring funeral homes to provide the names of unclaimed cremains to the Department of Veterans Services (DVS). DVS will screen the names to determine eligibility for burial in a state veterans cemetery.

Status: Supported by Governor McDonnell. Legislation HB1056 (Delegates Anderson/Stolle) and SB433 (Senators Reeves/Puller)

Voting Status of Ex Officio Members of the Board of Veterans Services: Goal is to strengthen the capacity of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) to fulfill the Powers and Duties set forth in the Code of Virginia by granting voting privileges to all *ex officio* members. Status: Supported by Governor McDonnell. Legislation HB730 (Del. Dudenhefer) and SB297 (Sen. Puller).

### **2. Legislative/Budget**

Delivery of Benefit Services: Goal is to improve the delivery of benefit services to veterans by changing the ratio of claims agents to veterans to 1 to 23,000 and providing funding for four positions.

Status: approved by Governor McDonnell. \$255,136 in Governor's introduced budget. Legislation HB1121 (Del. Cox, M.K.) and SB254 (Sen. Reeves).

### **3. Budget**

Homeless Veterans: Goal is to reduce and prevent veterans homelessness in Virginia by implementing as many strategies identified in the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) 2010 study as state fiscal resources will allow. Status: Governor McDonnell's introduced budget includes \$197,018 and two Homeless Veterans Coordinator positions.

Education Staffing: Goal is to ensure that the State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education and Training of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has the necessary position authorization to meet its new mission under the Post 9/11 GI Bill Improvement Act. Status: Governor McDonnell's introduced budget transfers two NGF positions to meet this goal.

Care Center Staffing: Goal is to ensure that state veterans care centers have the required personnel and financial resources to deliver quality care to residents. Status: Governor McDonnell's introduced budget includes \$2.7 million NGF (FY13) and \$3.6 million NGF (FY14) and 51 NGF positions.

Hampton Care Center Study: Goal is to ensure that a viable and appropriate site is selected for the construction of the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center. Status: Governor McDonnell's introduced budget includes funding for a pre-planning study.

### **4. Admin**

Veterans Identification: Goal is to provide a simple, ready means of identification of veterans status for Virginia's veterans by creating a Virginia Veterans ID Card. Status: Supported by Governor McDonnell. Under development by DMV. Target rollout is Memorial Day, 2012.

**5. Information Only** – Future objective under better economic conditions would be to recognize the community service and philanthropic contributions of Virginia's Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) by establishing an exemption for VSOs from state and local Sales or Use Taxes.

Position papers on these items are attached