

New Hampshire
STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT
OCTOBER 2022



INTRODUCTION

In accordance with RSA 115-A:8, State Veterans Advisory Committee, this report is issued to the Speaker of the House, Senate President, Governor, Executive Council, Chairs of the Veteran committees and the various veterans' organizations active in the State of New Hampshire. One report is issued in October of each year.

HISTORY

RSA 115-A:8 states that a veterans' advisory committee be formed composed of two Senators appointed by the President of the Senate, two Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House and members of various veteran organizations. The members shall elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary from the committee membership.

On July 17, 2002, Mr. Ken Leidner, past chairman of the committee's predecessor, called the organizational meeting to order at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) in Concord, NH. The primary purpose was to elect the officers of the new State Veterans Advisory Committee. The initial veteran organization members present were the American Legion (AMLEGION), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), The Retired Officers Association (TROA) (now the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)), and the Reserve Officers Association (ROA). Elections were held in accordance with the governing RSA. The first officers elected were: Dr. Griffin Dalianis, DAV, Chairman, LCDR David Kenney, USNR, Vice - Chairman, and Mr. Edward Granger, TREA, Secretary. Since 2002 the committee has generally met monthly except for a two-month summer recess period. The committee adopted bylaws as of June 8, 2004, to govern management and operation. These bylaws were most recently updated in February of 2020.

During the 2007 Legislative session the Governor signed an amendment to RSA 115- A:8 increasing the voting membership of the SVAC from ten to fourteen veterans' organizations in the state of New Hampshire. In 2008 the authorized number of voting organizations was reached and SB 15, introduced in the 2009 session, was adopted to increase the membership to a maximum of 20 organizations (plus the two legislative members from both the Senate and from the House).

This report contains a summary of the meeting highlights, committee composition, legislative initiatives, and successes the State Veterans Advisory Committee accomplished during this reporting period.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The officers, legislative members and twenty member organizations are shown below. Each legislative member and organization have one vote. (*The assigned members below are as of 29 Sept 2022 in some cases due to elections and organizational changes, assigned members may change mid-term.*)

Chairman Paul Lloyd – Veterans of Foreign Wars of NH

Vice Chairman –Andrew Patterson – Disabled American Veterans

Secretary – Tony Fowler – Military Order of the Purple Heart,

Treasurer – Kelly Dobens; NHVA

Chair Emeritus- Dave Kenny, ROA

Chaplain – Armand Soucy, Catholic War Veterans

Legislative Members:

- Senator Regina Birdsell
- Senator Bob Guida
- Representative Al Baldasaro
- Representative Patricia Klee

Voting Organization Members (as of the date of this report):

- 1 Air Force Association (AFA) (*P – Kevin Grady, A-Gavin “Mac” MacAloon*)
- 2 Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) (*P – Bob Heichlinger, A – Ray Hayes*)
- 3 American Legion (AMLEGION) (*P –Mike Lopez, A – Robert Blais, A- Gary Wayman*)
- 4 AUSA (*P – Greg d’Arbonne, A-BG(Ret.) Ed Harrington*)
- 5 Catholic War Veterans (*P – Denise DeBlois, A – Robert Guldner, A- Armand Soucy*)
- 6 Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (*P- Nate Smith*)
- 7 Disabled American Veterans (DAV) (*P- Richard “Rick” Borrazas, A – Andrew Patterson*)
- 8 Korea War Veterans Association (*P – Mike Lopez, A – Conrad Perreault*)
- 9 Marine Corps League (MCL) (*P – Shawn Carboni, A – Mark Lindsley, A- Chris Peirce*)
- 10 Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) (*P – Peter Burdett, A – Robert Jaffin, A – Warren Coulter*)
- 11 Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH) (*P — P-Tony Fowler*)
- 12 National Guard Association of New Hampshire (*P –Peter Duffy, A – Roy Hunter, A –Mike Horne*)
- 13 New Hampshire Army Retiree Council (*P – Frank Musmanno, A – Mike Rice*)

- 14 NHNG Enlisted Association (*P – Michael Lestage, A – Michael Rice, A – Jack Howley*)
- 15 NH Veterans Association (*P – Kelly Dobens, A-Mike Young, A- Doug Crooker*)
- 16 Reserve Officers Association (ROA) (*P – Dave Kenney, A – Mike Horne, A – John Pappas*)
- 17 Rolling Thunder (*P – Bruce Garry, A- Keith Hurrell, A – Diane Domenicis*)
- 18 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) (*P – Leon Rideout, A-Denis Querrard, A-Paul Lloyd*)
- 19 Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA-41) (*P – Raymond Goulet, Jr., A –Alan Grant*)
- 20 Patriot Resilient Leader Institute (Camp Resilience) (*P- Kurt Webber, A- Ed Harrington*)

Committee Advisors (Non-voting):

Leadership from various state agencies routinely attend meetings & provide advice to the Committee, including:

- Warren M. Perry, Col., USA (Ret), *Deputy Adjutant General*
- Bill Gaudreau, Director, *Division of Veterans Services*
- Peggy LaBrecque, Commandant, *NH Veterans Home*, *Kim MacKay replaced Peggy as Commandant.*
- Barry Conway, *Sage Emeritus*, *Peggy LaBrecque replaced Barry as Sage Emeritus*
- Shawn Buck, Director, *NH State Veterans Cemetery*
- Amy Cook, Director, *Division of Community Based Military Programs*
- Kevin Forrest, Corey Beem & Stella Lareau – *Manchester Veterans Medical Center*
- Dr. Brett Rusch, Dr. Becky Rhoads – *VA White River Jct.*
- Jim Adams – *State Veterans Council*
- John Reed – *Martins Point Health Care*

Governor's Representative:

Jane Graham

Representatives of the NH Congressional Delegation

Representatives attend all meetings for information and coordination purposes.
Attendees during the reporting period included the following:

Chris Scott, (Senator Jeanne Shaheen)
Justin Troiano, (Senator Maggie Hassan)
Tom Giancola, Molly Small (Representative Annie Kuster)
Patrick Carroll, Kat Cosgrove and Jake Friedman, Brett Lavasseur (Representative Chris Pappas)

REGULAR ATTENDEES DURING THE PERIOD OF THIS REPORT:

Rep Jim Creighton
Rep Brodie Deshaies
Jim Adams, State Veterans Council
Jorg Dreusicke, VFW Legislative Committee
Bill Roy, American Legion
John Reed, Martins Point Health Care
LTC Roy Hunter
Carol Hitchcock, VA White River Jct.
JP Marzullo, Liberty House

FEATURED SPEAKERS/GUESTS DURING THIS REPORT PERIOD:

Nicquelle Godfrey, Esq. Veterans Naturalization Program
Terry Mitchell, Aspire 365 Group
Brieyana Santana, Realtor and Arthur "Buying with VA Loans"
Martha Mumenthala, Director of Foliage Retrievers Service Dogs
Steve Wade and Robin Schell, Brian Injury Association of NH
Julie Weymouth, Executive Director of the Homeland Heroes Association
BG Don Bolduc
Jeffrey Cox, NHNG
Brian Hanson, NH Workerbee Fund
Congressman Pappas
Richard Marsh, Author, and Webmaster of Images of New Hampshire history
John Randolph, Harmony Homes

COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

Mutual communication is a vital function of this committee. We interpret this function broadly. Meetings are posted on the legislative calendar. Primarily, email is used to distribute agendas, meeting minutes, and other pertinent information to ensure timely delivery to committee members and other interested parties. In addition, press releases and news items of interest are also delivered to the email distribution list as well as posted on the SVAC Facebook page. When SVAC press releases are generated they are sent to all major news outlets in NH.

Members of the Committee often participate in the public dialogue on veterans' issues, either as the representatives of their veterans' organization or as individuals. Committee member organizations further the reach of Committee communications through publication of relevant items in their own newsletters, websites, and other media. The Committee strives to quickly disseminate information on events and matters of interest to veterans. Matters brought to the attention of the SVAC can be distributed more expeditiously via the email and newsletters of member organizations, reaching the approximately 105,000 members of the New Hampshire veteran community, as well as family members and various veteran outreach groups. Information passed to the committee is routinely emailed to the SVAC distribution list including events of interest, job postings for veterans, job fair

announcements and various items related to veterans 'services in the State of New Hampshire.

The Committee regularly invites speakers and visitors representing various veteran- oriented organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, to present information to SVAC members. These presenters inform SVAC of the broad spectrum of services available to NH veterans. Legislators and their constituents are invited to present their views on current or pending legislative issues to SVAC for consideration in deciding support for legislation during each session.

The Committee encourages and invites all legislators, especially prime sponsors of veteran related legislation, to more frequently participate and exchange views with the members of the SVAC in developing positions on matters important to the veterans of New Hampshire.

The Committee continues to work routinely with the VA in Manchester and White River Junction and state agencies who provide services and support for the NH veteran population. In addition, we have representation on the PTSD/TBI commission and the Military Leadership Team. We remain engaged with the various agencies and leaders in the state to obtain an accurate picture of New Hampshire's services to veterans.

SVAC scheduled meetings are sent to the House and Senate clerks for posting on their respective House/Senate calendars.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES THIS PERIOD

The Committee continues to be actively involved in providing guidance and testimony on legislation put forth on behalf of veterans.

The Legislative Committee: chaired by Kevin Grady, monitors legislative activities, drafts proposed testimony, coordinates and leads SVAC testimony and activities as needed. Bill recommendations are made after discussions and voting involving the full SVAC membership.

Positions on the various bills are determined by majority vote of the full Committee. The Committee position on a bill does not prohibit any member organization from presenting their organizations position to the General Court.

During this period the SVAC took formal positions on 14 bills and followed 3 bills that came through the complete legislative process for 2021-2022. The decision to follow a bill means the SVAC believes the issue in question may not primarily be a veteran's issue but could evolve into something that does impact veterans or may with amendments evolve to be considered for full support. The status of the bills for which SAC supported and followed during this session is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

BILL/LSR	RELATIVE TO ...	SVAC POSITION	REMARKS
HB 1106	establishing a committee to study recruiting members of the armed forces	Support	OTP as amended
HB 1256	relative to positions within the department of military affairs and veteran's services	Support	OTP as amended
HB 1505	establishing concurrent jurisdiction in juvenile matters with the US Department of Defense for coordination with the Military Family Advocacy Program	Support	OTP
HB 1575	relative to waiver of tuition in the university system	Support	OTP in Senate
HB 1653	relative to educational and employment opportunities and protections for military families and their dependants	Support	Amended in Senate
HB 1667	relative to the standard and optional veterans' tax credit and the all veterans' tax credit	Support	
SB 360	relative to National Guard education benefits	Support	OTP
HB 1050	declaring November 11th as Remembrance Day	Oppose	Interim Study
HB 1056	relative to veterans' tax credits	Follow	ITL
HB 1092	requiring an official declaration of war for activation of the New Hampshire National Guard	Oppose	ITL
HB 1314	establishing a committee to study the management and oversight of the New Hampshire Veterans' Home	Oppose	ITL
HB 1353	renaming a wing of the New Hampshire Veterans Home	Follow	Interim Study
HB 1362	relative to the authority of the state guard	Oppose	ITL
HB 1375	relative to the definition of veteran for the purpose of certain tax credits	Support	OTP
HB 1449	creating a toll booth exception for vehicle funeral procession to the Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen	Support	ITL
SB 349	requiring the legislature to give preference to deceased military veterans and first responders in the naming of bridges	Support	Interim Study
SB 413	requiring an independent audit and needs assessment regarding COVID-19 preparedness at long term care facilities, nursing homes including the New Hampshire veterans' home, and making an appropriation therefor	Follow	Interim Study

The Committee extends appreciation to all the legislative members who sponsored, co-sponsored and supported the various veteran-related bills during this session. We recognize that in times of fiscal restraint it is not always easy to support legislation that may increase State expenditures, no matter how worthy the purpose. We thank them for their dedication and hard work in support of New Hampshire veterans.

Community Partnerships: This session, SVAC continued to bridge the scope of input with regular briefings from Amy Cook, Director, Division of Community Based Military Programs, Mr. Shawn Buck, Director, NH State Veterans Cemetery, Mr. Bill Gaudreau, Director, Division of Veterans Service and Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General.

DMAVS representatives continue to keep SVAC informed on the changes, policies, and new developments coming from each of the service divisions in the Department of Military and Veterans Services. SVAC is also proud to support the new Veteran Friendly Business Recognition program crafted by the state's Military Leadership Team.

SVAC Treasurers Report: Kelly Dobens reports that we closed out the year with a balance of \$1002.67 in our bank account.

SVAC Elections: This year the Chairman and Secretary positions were up for election. At May's meeting, Chairman Lloyd was nominated for the position of Chairman, there was no nominations for Secretary. After nominations were closed at the June meeting, a motion was made and passed for the current Secretary to cast a single vote for the new slate of officers. Motion to elect Paul Lloyd as Chairman was unanimous.

CONCLUSION

The SVAC is currently comprised of 20 member organizations. The committee encourages any NH Veteran Service Organization (VSO) to attend our meetings.

A significant number of advisors, guests and representatives from our Congressional Delegation participate in the meetings in recognition of the mutual value of shared communications and collaboration on veteran issues.

We continue to work with members of the NH House and Senate to develop our support and testimony agenda for legislative actions on behalf of veterans. This committee can and will help to develop new legislation for veterans. Legislators are encouraged to review bill language with the committee prior to or during the filing period to ensure the SVAC understands the intent of the legislation. We can help avoid unintended consequences and clarify technical jargon.

The Committee is focused on our mission of providing a common voice for New Hampshire's veterans and their families. Our meetings provide a forum for announcing legislative or policy changes, veteran healthcare updates, and scheduled events that benefit veterans.

Questions, comments, or recommendations are always welcome. The committee chairman can be contacted by calling: 603-496-1918 or email at nhsvac.chair@gmail.com, the committee Vice Chair email nhsvac.vicechair@gmail.com or our Secretary at svacsecretary@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,



Paul Lloyd

Chairman, NH State Veterans Advisory Committee

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