

New Hampshire
STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT
OCTOBER 2025



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 Organization of America (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 three-month summer recess period. The committee adopted bylaws as of June 8, 2004, to govern management and operation. These bylaws were most recently reviewed and updated in March of 2023.

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 (20) member organizations are shown below. Each legislative member and organization have one vote. (*The assigned members below are as of 03 June 2025 in some cases due to elections and organizational changes, assigned members may change mid-term.*)

Chairman – Leo R. Paquin – *The American Legion*

Vice Chairman – Diane Domenicis – *Rolling Thunder*

Secretary – Deb Eldridge – *The American Legion*

Treasurer – Kelly Dobens – *NHVA*

Chair Emeritus – Paul Lloyd – *Veterans of Foreign Wars of NH*

Chaplain – Armand Soucy, *Catholic War Veterans*

Legislative Members:

- Senator Regina Birdsell
- Senator Tim Lang
- Representative Tom Mannion
- Representative Terry Roy

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

- 1 Air Force Association (AFA) (*P – Kevin Grady*)
- 2 Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) (*P – Martha Gladu, A – Richard Dolbec*)
- 3 American Legion (AMLEGION) (*P – Bill Roy, A – Myron Crossley, A - Leo Paquin*)
- 4 AUSA (*P – Greg d’Arbonne, A- Kenneth Niles*)
- 5 Catholic War Veterans (*P – Denise DeBlois, A- Armand Soucy*)
- 6 Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (*P- Nate Smith*)
- 7 Disabled American Veterans (DAV) (*P- Richard “Rick” Borrazas, A – Mike Lopez*)
- 8 Korea War Veterans Association (*P – Mike Lopez, A – Conrad Perreault*)
- 9 Marine Corps League (MCL) (*P – Chris Peirce, A – Gary Gahan*)
- 10 Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) (*P – Peter Burdett, A – Laurance Miller, A – William Luti*)
- 11 Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH) (*P - Tony Fowler*)
- 12 National Guard Association of New Hampshire (*P –Davis Ulricson, A –Eric Fessenden, A- Steve Greco*)
- 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- Thomas Brown, A- Dawn Chabot*)
- 16 Patriot Resilient Leader Institute (Camp Resilience) (*P- Ed Harrington*)
- 17 Reserve Organization of America (ROA) (*P – Dave Kenney, A – Mike Horne, A – John Pappas*)
- 18 Rolling Thunder (*P – Bruce Garry, A – John Domenicis*)
- 19 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) (*P- Andrew “AJ” Corrow, A-Paul Lloyd, A – Darwin Beeman*)
- 20 Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA-41) (*P – Raymond Goulet, Jr., A- Robert Heichlinger*)

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 (Retired mid-term)*
- Nicole Desilets-Bixler, Col., USAF (Ret), *Deputy Adjutant General*
- Bill Gaudreau, Director, *Division of Veterans Services*
- Kim MacKay, *Commandant NH Veterans Home*
- Peggy LaBrecque, *Sage Emeritus*
- Shawn Buck, Director, *NH State Veterans Cemetery*
- Brent Fraser, Director, *Division of Community Based Military Programs*
- Kevin Forrest, Director, *Manchester VA Medical Center*
- Julie Vose- Associate Director, *Manchester VA Medical Center*
- Dr. Brett Rusch– Executive Director, *VA White River Jct.*
- Jim Adams – *State Veterans Council*
- Brenda Pannels - *Martins Point Health Care*
- Miquel Morales, *SBA*
- Ena Lima- *VBA*

Governor’s Representative:

Trevor McAden- Governor Chris Sununu
Stephen Pecora- Governor Kelly Ayotte

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)
Nick Brown, (Representative Annie Kuster)
Nick Brown, (Representative Maggie Goodlander)
Gage Wheeler, Brendan Mirra (Representative Chris Pappas)

FEATURED SPEAKERS/GUESTS DURING THIS REPORT PERIOD:

Rodney Anderson - Rotors to Reels
Dan Beliveau - Gulf Wars Memorial Monument
Brenda Pennels- Pharmacy at Martin's Point Health Center
Jessica Dunn - Staff Sergeant Fox Grant
Hon. Michael Moffitt (LtCol, USMCR) – NH State Representative
Allen Aldenberg- Easterseals NH Military & Veterans Campus
Jeff Ladieu & Kurt Webber- Camp Resilience
Zachary Phillips - Veterans Legal Justice

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 93,000 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 organization’s position to the General Court.

During this period the SVAC took formal positions on nine (9) bills and followed one (1) bill that came through the complete legislative process for 2024-2025. 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 SVAC supported and followed during this session is shown on the table below:

BILL/LSR	RELATIVE TO ...	COMMITTEE	STATUS	PRIME SPONSOR	LAST/NEXT HEARING	SVAC POSITION	REMARKS
HOUSE							
HB 62	Relative to protection of persons from domestic violence and military protective orders (amended)	Senate Judiciary	Signed by Governor, 6 Jun 25	Terry Roy	17 Apr/1300	Support	Enrolled, 22 May
HB 64	spouses to the state and private businesses, and establishing purchase preferences for veterans and their spouses regarding state supply purchases.(amended)	Senate Executive Departments and Admin	Signed by Governor, 23 Jun 25	Terry Roy	26 Mar /0945	Support	House concurred with Senate Amendment
HB 99	Relative to a waiver from property taxes for disabled veterans (amended)	Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs	Signed by Governor, 14 May 25	Michael Moffett	25 Mar/0945	Follow	OTP 5-0, Consent Calendar
HB 120	Relative to transferring statutory authority from the department of education to the department of military affairs and veterans services regarding educational support services.	Senate Executive Departments and Admin	Signed by Governor, 29 May 25	Jim Creighton	2 Apr/1000	Support	OTP 5-0, Consent Calendar
HB 122	Relative to payment of claims arising out of actions or activities of the New Hampshire National Guard	Senate Finance	Signed by Governor, 14 May 25	Jim Creighton	1 Apr/1315	Support	OTP 6-0, Consent Calendar
HB 142	Relative to Gold Star Mother's Day (amended by Senate)	Senate Executive Departments and Admin	Signed by Governor, 1 Aug 25	Michael Moffett	9 Apr/1300	Oppose	Will need Committee of Conference
HB 225	Relative to the employment of military spouses in the event of involuntary deployment of service member (amended)	Senate Commerce	Signed by Governor, 15 Jul 25	Jim Creighton	25 Mar/0930	Support	Will need Committee of Conference
SENATE							
SB 12	Relative to adding eligibility for a disability placard for certain veterans	House Transportation	Signed by Governor, 22 Jul 25	David Watters	23 Apr/0930	Support	Awaiting Enrollment
SB 196	Relative to the exemption from competitive bidding requirements for certain state agency projects.	House Executive Departments and Admin	Signed by Governor, 17 Jun 25	David Watters	9 Apr/1330	Support	Awaiting Enrollment
SB 271	Relative to qualifications for issuing veteran license plates to include General Discharge under Honorable Conditions	House Transportation	Signed by Governor, 15 Jul 25	Denise Ricciardi	6 May/1020	Support	Awaiting Enrollment
BILLS NOT ADVANCING THIS SESSION							
BILL/LSR	RELATIVE TO ...	COMMITTEE	STATUS	PRIME SPONSOR	LAST/NEXT HEARING	SVAC POSITION	REMARKS
HB 55	Relative to the Selective Service Compliance Act (amended title)	Senate Executive Departments and Admin	ITL in Senate	Tom Mannion	26 Mar/1000	Oppose	ITL, 4-0, Consent Calendar
HB 104	Relative to requiring an official declaration of war for the activation of the New Hampshire National Guard	State-Federal Relations and Veteran Affairs	Retained In Committee	Tom Mannion	17 Oct/1000	Oppose	Executive Session on 17 Oct
HB 145	Relative to background checks for licensed dietitians and adopting the dietician licensure compact (amended)	Executive Departments and Administration	Laid on Table	Jaci Grote	23 Jan/1045	Follow	OTP as amended, 9-6
HB 170	Relative to the divisions of military pensions during divorce proceedings	Children and Family Law	ITL	Michael Moffett	21 Jan/1300	Follow	ITL, 15-1, Consent Calendar
HB 205	Relative to exempting veterans from certification fees for therapeutic cannabis	Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs	ITL	Heath Howard	22 Jan/1115	Oppose	ITL, 17-1, Consent Calendar
HB 254	Relative to options for end of life care	Judiciary	Laid on Table	Bob Lynn	29 Jan/1300	Oppose	House Vote 183-182
HB 433	Making 17 the age of consent for marriage if either party is active duty military and removing language regarding age waivers for marriage registration records,since age waivers are no longer issued in New Hampshire.	Senate Judiciary	ITL in Senate	Margaret Drye	6 May/1330	Follow	ITL, 5-0, Consent Calendar
HB 447	Relative to property tax exemptions for disabled veterans	Municipal and County Government	ITL	Jim Creighton	30 Jan/1320	Follow	ITL, 18-0, Consent Calendar
SB 66	relative to third-party veterans' claims assistance and protection.	Commerce	Rereferred to Committee	Timothy Lang	23 Jan/1030	Oppose	Rereferred 6-0
SB 224	Relative to increasing the maximum amount of the optional veterans' tax credit	Election Law and Municipal Affairs	ITL	Bill Gannon	18 Feb/1000	Follow	ITL, 3-1 Consent Calendar

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 Brent Fraser, Director, Division of Community Based Military Programs, Mr. Shawn Buck, Director, NH State Veterans Cemetery, Mr. Bill Gaudreau, Director, Division of Veterans Service, Kim MacKay, NH Veterans Home, and Nicole Desilets-Bixler, 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 \$752.67 in our bank account.

SVAC Elections: This year the Vice-Chair and Treasure positions were up for election. At the June 2025 meeting AJ Corrow (VFW) was nominated, and unanimously elected, for the position of Vice-Chairman. Kelly Dobens (NHVA) was nominated, and unanimously re-elected, for the position of Treasurer.

CONCLUSION

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

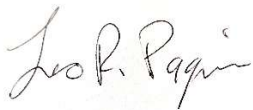
A significant number of advisors, guests and representatives from our Congressional Delegation participate in the meetings in recognition of the mutual value of shared communications and collaboration on veteran issues.

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: 603-558-2372 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,



Leo R. Paquin

Chairman, NH State Veterans Advisory Committee

<https://www.dmav.snh.gov/about-us/councils-and-committees/state-veterans-advisory-committee>

<https://www.facebook.com/NHsvac/>
