

No. 2017-69

AN ACT

HB 1231

Amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, providing for veterans registry.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Title 51 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes is amended by adding a section to read:

§ 712. Veterans registry.

(a) Establishment of veterans registry.—The department shall establish a registry of veterans residing in this Commonwealth in order to provide information on Federal, State and local government benefits, programs and services available to veterans and to link veterans with resources that can provide assistance. Upon registration, if permission is granted by the registrant, the registrant's information shall be shared with county directors of veterans affairs and other State agencies.

(b) Coordination with State agencies.—The department shall coordinate with other State agencies that have contact with veterans to establish a paper and an online registry form to enable State agencies to assist the department in registering veterans who wish to be included in the registry.

(c) Duties of department.—The department shall provide access to a paper and an online registry form which contain a statement indicating the purpose for the registry. The forms shall be developed to obtain the following information relating to the veteran:

(1) Personal information, including title, first, middle and last name.

(2) Age, gender, address and county of residence.

(3) Ten-digit phone number and e-mail address.

(4) Declaration of military service.

(5) Benefit and program information requests for various benefits and programs for which veterans may be eligible.

(6) A signed statement, or, for online applicants, a box that is checked, indicating that the veteran grants permission for the department to store and share the veteran's information with the county director of veterans affairs for the county indicated and with other State agencies to ensure that the Commonwealth provides the veteran assistance in receiving earned benefits.

(7) The State agency which assisted the veteran.

(d) Duties of State agencies.—State agencies under subsection (b) shall:

(1) Utilize the paper or online registry form to develop a mechanism to identify veterans the agency serves for the purpose of expanding the registry.

(2) For each veteran who wishes to be included in the registry, provide assistance in filling out the paper or online registry form for the department to add the veteran to the registry.

(3) Submit a registrant's paper registry form to the department within 30 days from the date the veteran opts into the registry.

(e) Use of information.—Information collected under this section may not be sold or used for commercial purposes or used for purposes not specified under this section. Information collected under this section for the registry shall be exempt from being disclosed under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law.

(f) Report.—By January 1, 2018, and each January 1 thereafter, the department shall submit to the chairperson and minority chairperson of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee of the Senate and the chairperson and minority chairperson of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee of the House of Representatives a report on the registry which shall include:

(1) The total number of veterans registered with the department annually.

(2) The number of registrants received by each State agency.

(3) The number of veterans who choose not to be included in the registry annually from each State agency.

(4) Outreach expenses incurred by the department.

(g) Guidelines.—The Adjutant General may adopt and promulgate guidelines necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

APPROVED—The 22nd day of December, A.D. 2017

TOM WOLF