

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Amend the Veterans' Services Laws

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§5-C is enacted to read:

5-C.

<u>Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management</u>	<u>Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System Care Fund Advisory Board</u>	<u>Expenses Only</u>	<u>37-B MRSA §512-A</u>
---	--	----------------------	-------------------------

Sec. 2. 37-B MRSA §508, as amended by PL 2009, c. 406, §11, is further amended to read:

§ 508. Veteran service officers

Veteran service officers shall serve, assist and advocate for all veterans. A veteran service officer must be trained and conversant on the issues, benefits and definitions affecting all veterans, including atomic, Vietnam, Desert Storm and female veterans. The bureau shall have at least one veteran service officer who specializes in female veterans' issues.

Sec. 3. 37-B MRSA §512-A is enacted to read:

§ 512-A. Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System Care Fund Advisory Board

1. Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System Care Fund Advisory Board; establishment. The Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System Care Fund Advisory Board, as established by Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 5-C and referred to in this section as "the board," shall monitor, facilitate and provide recommendations for the administration, management and use of the Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System Care Fund.

2. Members. The board consists of the following 7 members appointed by the Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management:

A. One member representing the interests of the Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management;

B. One member representing the interests of the Treasurer of State;

C. One member representing the interests of the American Legion or a successor organization;

D. One member representing the interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or a successor organization;

E. One member representing the interests of Disabled American Veterans or a successor organization;

F. One member representing the interests of American Veterans or a successor organization; and

G. One member representing the interests of an organization that provides a forum for veterans' organizations to work together on behalf of veterans in the State.

3. Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy on the board, the Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management shall appoint a new member to fill the vacancy until the expiration of the term. A vacancy on the board must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made under subsection 2.

4. Terms. Members of the board are appointed for 3-year terms.

5. Removal. The Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management may remove a member of the board for cause.

6. Voting; quorum. A quorum consists of 5 members of the board. Each member has one vote. A recommendation may not be approved by the board without at least 3 affirmative votes.

7. Board proceedings. The board shall meet not less than annually at a date and time set by the director. The director shall prepare the agenda and prepare and keep a summarized record of meetings. The board may not make binding decisions but shall vote on recommendations. The director shall be present at the meetings to facilitate the meetings. The director does not have a vote.

Sec. 4. Staggered terms. Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 37-B, section 512-A, subsection 4, of the initial members of the Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System Care Fund Advisory Board, the Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management shall designate 2 appointees to serve for one-year terms, 2 appointees to serve for 2-year terms and 3 appointees to serve for 3-year terms.

SUMMARY

This bill requires that the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services have at least one veteran service officer who specializes in female veterans' issues.

The bill also establishes the Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery System Care Fund Advisory Board.