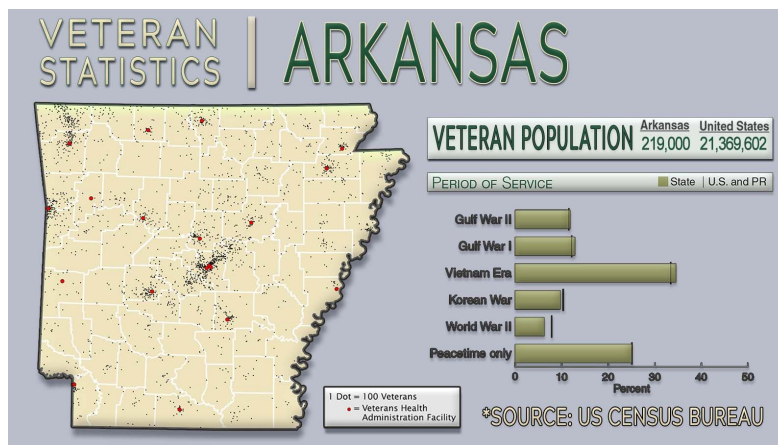




Arkansas House Newsletter

November 8, 2019

Honoring Our Veterans



Arkansas is home to over 219,000 Veterans. They live and work in every community throughout our state. Our men and women who served are an extraordinarily selfless group. They worked as a team and looked out for one another.

We must look out for them.

In 2017, the General Assembly passed Act 141 which exempts military retirement benefits from state income tax.

This year, we continued our effort to improve veteran affairs in our state with various legislation.

ACT 820 of 2019 provides automatic licensure for active duty service members, returning military veterans, the spouses of active duty service members, and the spouses of returning military veterans. This eliminates red tape for our military and veterans by allowing those individuals to engage in an occupation if they are in good standing of a equivalent occupational license issued by another state.

ACT 66 of 2019 allows a person applying to obtain a veteran designation on a driver's license or identification card to provide different types of military discharge documents to show that he or she had a discharge status

of “honorable” or “general under honorable conditions”.

And we continue our work with an extensive study outlined in Act 551.

Act 551 requires the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs to examine veterans issues within Arkansas. The committees met just recently in El Dorado. Members were updated on the economic impact veterans have on our state and ways we can improve delivery of services.

Members were also briefed by the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) on ways efforts to prevent suicides among the veteran population.

According to the 2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention annual report, 6,139 veterans died by suicide in 2017, 97 of whom were Arkansans.

The Arkansas Department of Veteran’s Affairs (ADVA), the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), the Arkansas Veteran’s Coalition and the Central Arkansas Veteran’s Healthcare System’s (CAVHS) Suicide Prevention Program have formed a partnership to address the issue of veteran suicide in the state. This Veteran’s Day, the department wants current and former service men and women to know there is help and Arkansas is home to over 219,000 Veterans. They live and work in every community throughout our state. Our men and women who served are an extraordinarily selfless group. They worked as a team and looked out for one another.

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The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Veterans can access the Veteran Crisis Line by calling the national line and pressing 1. Anyone can also text the crisis line by sending TALK to 741741 or chat online at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>.

The committees will continue to study veteran affairs throughout the year, and file a written report with Legislative Council by December 1, 2020. Recommendations will be considered in the 2021 Regular Session. The House is proud to say we have 14 members who have served our country. But all of us are continually reminded of the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families and we do our best to make sure they are well cared for and that our policies make life a little easier.

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