

**REPORT OF THE VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL TO PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CREATION OF THE OHIO
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

(Created in accordance with the Executive Order 2007-11S)

DECEMBER 31, 2007

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BACKGROUND / STATUTORY AUTHORITY

In the 2006 gubernatorial campaigns, the major veterans' organizations sent letters to all candidates for the office of Governor. The candidates were asked specific questions to determine what their campaign plans were for various veterans' issues in the state of Ohio, if they were elected. One such question was how the candidates stood on creating an Ohio Department of Veterans' Affairs. For several years, the major veteran's organizations, through their convention resolutions, had recommended to the Governor and state legislature that they create an Ohio Department of Veterans' Affairs. These resolutions were not acted upon by state government. Governor Strickland responded positively to this question and strongly supported the creation of an Ohio Department of Veterans' Affairs in his campaign promises to Ohioans. As a result, he issued Executive Order 2007-11S on May 30, 2007 (Appendix A) to establish a Veterans Study Council to provide recommendations regarding the creation of the Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / OVERALL FINDINGS

Unanimously, the Veterans Study Council recommends the establishment of an Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs with a cabinet level director.

The Council was initially divided into four subcommittees to research and report on different areas covered in Executive Order 2007-11S (Appendix A). The four areas were: projected services, enhance veterans' benefits, evaluate other states' structure, and current services provided. The recommendations provided in this final report reflect the findings of each subcommittee as voted upon by the complete Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To establish an Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs with a cabinet level Director.
2. To develop, produce, and distribute statewide marketing programs to assist in advising veterans on their benefits.
3. To fund, staff and allow the absorption/assimilation of all veteran related programs within the State of Ohio and have complete operational control and authority over all state programs and federal funding pertinent to veterans' affairs and oversight of government entities purported to assist veterans and/or their dependents with all programs and activities being handled under the umbrella of one office, centralizing the accountability and tracking of all services provided to Ohio's veterans from any source.
4. To establish agreements with other agencies – ODJFS, Adjutant General, etc, to ensure that all veterans are provided access to benefit information, ODVA will work closely with the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs to track federal benefits being provided to Ohio's veterans and their dependants and will contract for the same if necessary. ODVA will be given statutory authority to maintain all DD214s. ODVA will be given authority to require all state and county agencies and nursing homes, to screen all veterans or veterans' dependants to determine their status. Establishment of an ODVA Advisory Board, the Governor's Women Veterans Advisory Committee be given statutory appointment and a seat on the ODVA Advisory Board if it is established.
5. To Include under ODVA: GOVA duties, Education, Training Programs, War Orphans Scholarship, DVOPS/LVRS, Ceremonies, Hall of Fame, Veterans Home, Grant Writing, Legislative Liaison, Compliance Monitoring, Marketing, Employment, Homeless Veterans Program, Incarcerated Veterans Program along with a 'catch all' for any programs not mentioned.
6. To be a central clearinghouse for information to and oversight of personnel providing services to the veterans of the State of Ohio related to delivering veterans benefits.
7. To have regulatory oversight responsibility and authority to ensure that all staff maintain any continuing educational requirements necessary in their assigned tasks, proficiency, and demonstrate good service provision to clientele.
8. To provide regulatory oversight over training and certification for County Veteran Service Commissioners (VSC) and County Veteran Service Officers

(CVSO), and will track and review all training and accreditation for other personnel providing services to the veterans of the State of Ohio.

9. To establish uniform reporting standards for all personnel providing services to the veterans of the State of Ohio, including but not limited to VSCs, CVSOs, and Veteran Service Organizations.
10. To require that all personnel providing VA claims services to veterans of the State of Ohio must meet continuing educational requirements and certifications; either federal, veterans service organizations and/or state.
11. To assist in improving training for all personnel providing VA claims services to the veterans of the State of Ohio. Some web-based training should be developed with the assistance of those entities requiring training as a supplemental training method to face-to-face training in limited circumstances.
12. To ensure that in the event personnel providing services to the veterans of the State of Ohio are found to be in non-compliance with the mandates of Ohio law, ODVA shall have the authority to recommend corrective action.
13. To adequately fund Veteran Service Organizations performing a state function of statewide claims assistance to Ohio veterans and dependants if recognized for such purposes by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
14. To ensure individual county veterans service commissions and veterans' service offices will maintain their individuality, control their own funding, and manage their own internal business under the provisions of Title 59, ORC.
15. To maintain the current status of the Ohio National Guard, separate from the Ohio Department of Veterans' Affairs.

APPENDIX A

EXECUTIVE ORDER



TED STRICKLAND
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

Executive Order 2007-11S

Establishing a Study Council to Provide Recommendations Regarding the Creation of the Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs

1. **Ohio Has A Rich History of Its Citizens Serving in the Armed Forces.** Ohio has a proud history of its sons and daughters serving in the National Guard and our nation's armed forces. In fact, Ohio is home to over a million veterans and thousands more military personnel who are serving today.
2. **Ohio Must Ensure That Its Veterans Receive the Services and Support They Need.** For too long, Ohio's veterans have not been receiving the support or services they deserve. Every Ohioan who has served in our nation's armed forces and their families must be connected to the benefits that they have earned and to which they are entitled.
3. **Establishment of the Veterans Study Council.** To ensure that Ohio's veterans are receiving the support that they need, I hereby order the establishment of a Veterans Study Council (the "Study Council").
 - a. **The Role of the Study Council.** The mission of the Study Council is to:
 - i. Identify existing State services that are provided to veterans and their families
 - ii. Examine ways in which State services to veterans and their families can be aligned and reorganized into a new cabinet-level department
 - iii. Look at ways to enhance the use of federal resources and communicate effectively with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs; and

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- iv. Compile these findings in a report of recommendations that I will receive by no later than December 31, 2007
- b. **The Composition of the Study Council.** The Study Council shall be composed of twenty-two members:
 - i. A chairperson of the Study Council, appointed by the Governor
 - ii. American Legion Department of Ohio Commander or his designee
 - iii. AMVETS Department of Ohio Commander or his designee
 - iv. Army and Navy Union USA Department of Ohio Commander or his designee
 - v. Catholic War Veterans Department of Ohio Commander or his designee
 - vi. County Veterans Service Officers President or his designee
 - vii. Disabled American Veterans Department of Ohio Commander or his designee
 - viii. Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans Chair or her designee
 - ix. Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee Chair or his designee
 - x. Jewish War Veterans Department of Ohio Commander or his designee
 - xi. Korean War Veterans Department of Ohio Commander or his designee
 - xii. Marine Corps League of Ohio Commandant or his designee
 - xiii. Military Order of the Purple Heart Department of Ohio Commander or his designee
 - xiv. Veterans of Foreign Wars Ohio State Commander or his designee
 - xv. Veterans Service Commissioners President or his designee
 - xvi. Vietnam Veterans of America Ohio State President or his designee
 - xvii. The Adjutant General or his designee
 - xviii. The Attorney General or his designee
 - xix. Two (2) members of the Ohio Senate, one appointed by the President of the Senate and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate
 - xx. Two (2) members of the Ohio House of Representatives, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House

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- c. **Assessment of Financial Resources Available to Ohio's Veterans.** In support of the Study Council's mission, I direct the Office of Budget and Management to perform a financial review of services provided to veterans by state entities and agencies, including, but not limited to, the Ohio Veterans Homes Agency, the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Adjutant General, the Department of Education, the Board of Regents and the Attorney General.
 - d. **Support Staff and Compensation.** The Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs shall provide all administrative, financial, and staff support for the Study Council and no member of the Study Council will receive compensation.
4. I signed this executive order on May 30, 2007 in Columbus, Ohio and it will expire on my last day of office unless rescinded before then.




Ted Strickland, Governor

ATTEST:

Jennifer Brunner, Secretary of State

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APPENDIX B

OPEN MEETING LAWS AND ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER

The study council will follow the Ohio open meeting laws and Roberts rules of order as follows:

(A) Each organization as specified in the Executive Order shall name a representative(s), and an alternate(s), to the study council to represent the organization by July 9th and to forward the recommendations to the director of the governor's office of veterans' affairs.

(B) The quorum requirements of the governor's veterans' study council is established at – fourteen (14) members.

(C) A two-thirds (14 members) majority of the study council is required to approve or oppose any issue before the study council. A simple majority of study subcommittee members is required to approve or oppose any issue

(D) The study council meetings shall be conducted under Robert's rules of order

(E) The chairperson and vice chairperson for the study council shall be appointed by the governor. The staff of the governor's office of veterans' affairs shall perform the duties of secretary, as a non-voting member.

(F) The council shall meet every two weeks at a time and place determined by the chairperson of the veterans study council.

(G) The chairperson of the study council may call a special meeting of the council as necessary.

(H) Changes in the rules for the operation of the veterans study council requires a two-thirds vote of the council.

(I) All votes shall be roll call and in rotating order.

(J) Executive Summaries of the study council should be sent to members of the council at least seven days prior to the next regularly scheduled study council meeting.

(K) Any motions to be considered from a sub-committee by the study council shall be made in writing, and be a permanent part of the official minutes of said meetings(s).

APPENDIX C

MEMBERS

Chairperson of the Veterans Study Council
Merle Pratt

American Legion Department of Ohio
Department Service Director Donald R. Lanthorn+
Vice Commander Robert Kimball, Alternate

AMVETS Department of Ohio
Past National Commander William A. Boettcher*
Executive Director George Ondick, Alternate

Army and Navy Union USA Department of Ohio
Jack Decker

Catholic War Veterans Department of Ohio
State Commander Arminda Crawford

County Veterans Service Officers
Former President Jonathan Warmeling+
President James McAuliffe, Alternate

Disabled American Veterans Department of Ohio
State Adjutant Frank Williams

Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Chair Person Rebecca Lee
Margi Pettibone, Alternate

Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee
Chairman Roger Tackett
Vice Chairman Robert Park, Alternate

Jewish War Veterans Department of Ohio
State Commander Dr. Art Kamlet
Herb Greff, Alternate

Korean War Veterans Department of Ohio
Charles Cole

Marine Corps League Department of Ohio
State Judge Advocate John Maurer
State Veteran Service Officer William Eberle, Alternate

Military Order of the Purple Heart Department of Ohio
State Commander Mel Heis
Judge Advocate John Erby, Alternate

Veterans of Foreign Wars Ohio
State Commander William Seagraves

Veterans Service Commissioners
Former President Daniel Weist+

Vietnam Veterans of America Ohio
State President Thomas Burke
Ronald Miller, Alternate

The Adjutant General's Office

MG Harry Feucht**

The Attorney General's Office

William Miller*+

Two Members of the Ohio Senate

Senator Robert Spada*+

Senator John Boccieri*

Two Members of the Ohio House of Representatives

Representative Diana Fessler

Representative Peter Ujvagi

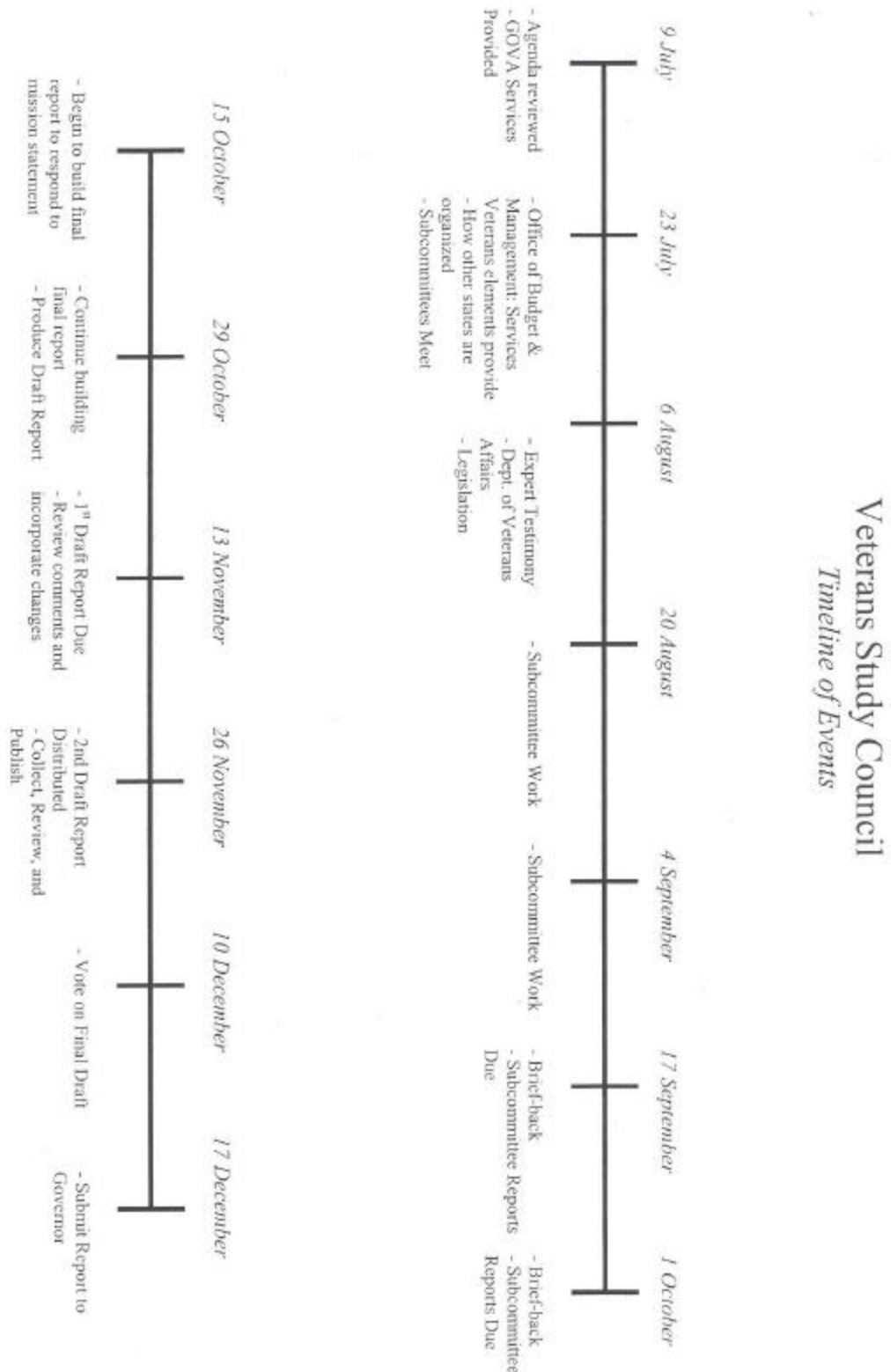
* Subcommittee Spokesperson

**Vice Chairperson of the Veterans Study Council

+ Final Draft Subcommittee

APPENDIX D

TIMELINE



APPENDIX E

SUBCOMMITTEES AND WORK ASSIGNMENT

1. Projected Services:	2. Enhance Veterans Benefits:	3. Evaluate other states' structure:	4. Current Services provided:
<i>"Which state services can be aligned & reorganized into a new dept.?"</i>	<i>"Look at ways to enhance the use of federal resources & to communicate effectively with the federal Dept of Vets Affairs..."</i>	<i>a. What do our peers do; how are they organized?</i>	<i>"Identify current state services provided to veterans & their families:"</i>
Training: VSC & CVSO		<i>b. What is the agency role in federal & state related legislation?</i>	<i>"From other state agencies."</i>
Outreach			
a) What current services does GOVA provide?			
b)What services should added or dropped?			
A. Crawford	Lee	Boettcher - Spokesperson	Decker
Warmeling - Tackett	Williams	Lanthorn	Cole
Weist	Maurer	Kamlet	Seagraves
	Miller, AG - Spokesperson	Burke	MG Feucht
M. Heis	Rep Fessler	Rep Ujvagi	Sen Boccieri - Spokesperson
Sen Spada - Spokesperson			

APPENDIX E

MEETING MINUTES

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Monday July 9, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. Introductions of representatives were conducted. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Don Lanthorn, American Legion
William Boettcher, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Jonathan Warmeling, OSACVSO
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Saul Laub, Jewish War Veterans
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
Mel Heis, Military Order of the Purple Heart
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Robert Stewart, OSACVSC
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry A.J. Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Andy Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Senator John Bocchieri (via phone)
Representative Diana Fessler
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

Mike Stith, OACVSC
William Eberle, Marine Corps League
George Ondick, AMVETS
Robert Bertschy, State Commander, Disabled American Veterans
Jim McAuliffe, OSACVSO
Robert Funk, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Robert Park, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Terry Worst, State Approving Agency for Veterans Education & Training (ODE/SAA)
Dan Weist, Cuyahoga CVSC
Robert Kimball
Stan Weigman
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Wade Rakes, Governor's Office
Ron Miller, Vietnam Veterans of America
Karen Kish, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Herbert Greff, Jewish War Veterans

Veronica Hampton, Troops to Teachers
James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Robert Labadie, Retired Veteran

Absent:

Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Agenda was accepted unanimously (motioned by William Boettcher and seconded by Frank Williams).

Bills and Communications: none

Welcoming Comments:

Wade Rakes provided comments on behalf of the Governor.

New Business:

Announcement of Vice Chair – Chairman Pratt announced MG Harry A.J. Feucht is the Vice Chair

Study Council Mission & Rules –

Chairman Pratt reviewed the executive order and the mission of the study council. Open meeting rules were provided, if there are any corrections or additions they will be discussed at the next meeting when the rules will be voted on. Regarding the Sunshine rules, these meetings are open to the public however there will not be any comments or testimony from visitors due to time restraints. Visitors are welcome to meet with council members one on one to discuss their concerns.

Subcommittees have been determined. A breakdown of the four sections was provided.

Representative Fessler requested and exchanged work assignments with Senator Boccheri and

Rebecca Lee requested and exchanged work assignments with Don Lanthorn.

Recommendations were provided by the council to expand the VA speakers to a national representative and the Union President and Vice-President from the Cleveland VA Regional Office.

The timeline is tight and demanding, the council needs to stay on schedule and on task.

Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs (GOVA) services, training, and outreach – Deputy Director Jim Forster provided a breakout of the duties and responsibilities of GOVA under ORC 5902. He further discussed the services the office provides to Ohio's citizens/veterans. See slides handout provided. Significant intake statistics provided: the office receives approximately 60 certificate requests and 175 letters and emails/month. Records receive approximately 1200 DD214s/month and 40 requests/day.

July 23rd is the next Council meeting

Adjournment:

Motioned by William Seagraves, seconded by Jonathan Warmeling, accepted unanimously.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday July 23, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Don Lanthorn, American Legion
William Boettcher, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Art Kamlet, Jewish War Veterans
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
Mel Heis, Military Order of the Purple Heart
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Mike Stith, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Ron Miller, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry A.J. Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator Robert Spada
Senator John Bocchieri
Representative Diana Fessler
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Matt Lampke, AAG
Robert Kimball, American Legion
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
George Ondick, AMVETS
William Eberle, Marine Corps League
Nancy Harry, Ohio Rehabilitation Comm. Services
Robert Park, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Susan Ackerman, Office of Budget Management
Jessica Levy, Office of Budget Management
Jim McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Mike Jackson, Operation Welcome Home/American Veterans Institute
Tara Dixon-Engel, Operation Welcome Home/American Veterans Institute
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Wade Rakes, Governor's Office
Karen Kish, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Veronica Hampton, Troops to Teachers

Absent:

Representative Peter Ujvagi
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans (illness)

The Minutes were accepted unanimously with a change recommended by Representative Fessler to note her comments on the allocation of funds by the state to the veterans service organizations (motioned by John Maurer and seconded by Frank Williams).

The Agenda was accepted unanimously (motioned by William Boettcher and seconded by William Miller).

Bills and Communications:

A letter is needed from the Army Navy Union and the Marine Corps League in reference to the change verbally mentioned with the alternates assigned.

A letter has been received by the Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners but needs clarification as there are two primaries listed (Robert Stewart and Michael Stith) and one alternate (Daniel Weist).

Korean War Veterans representative and alternate are both ill and will not be in attendance.

Old Business:

Rules presented at previous meeting were accepted unanimously (motioned by John Maurer and seconded by Frank Williams).

New Business:

Office of Budget Management (OBM) – Susan Ackerman shared veteran spending and veteran programs that are funded by the state and federally (please see attached handouts). The state funds currently allocated to the Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs just covers the salary/benefits of its four employees. The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame is funded within the Ohio Veterans Home budget (\$125,000 for FY08 and FY09). A federal vs. state funding breakdown will be provided by OBM along with the numbers of Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) that have not been filled over the last few years in comparison with the decrease of federal funding.

How Other States are Organized – The Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs Director, Tim Espich, provided a breakout of several states' Veterans Affairs offices (see attached slide handout). His presentation only consisted of structure and not benefits. The states covered were chosen due to population compared to Ohio with the addition of Kentucky which was included due to the Director being familiar with their system. Numbers provided for population are mathematical projections from the USDVA. Don Lanthorn noted that Alaska provides grants to the veteran organizations and, in turn, the organizations prepare and advocate all veterans' claims for the state. William Boettcher would like to see the percentage of claims that are filed through the state POAs vs. the organizations.

It was asked if there is a veteran population census or other single source of contact information for veterans within the state. Director Espich explained that the USDVA numbers only consist of those veterans that are in the USDVA system receiving pension or compensation; there is no other source for those outside of the system. Due to the Privacy Act, the USDVA cannot release the information they do have; any mailings conducted by the state from the USDVA information must be conducted in cooperation with the USDVA. The DD214s that are submitted to the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs could become a database but addresses submitted on those documents are not always accurate. When asked what his take is on the council and those involved becoming upset regarding changes Director Espich explained that the council is here to find the best way to serve veterans, and he is certain they will do just that. Questions were asked regarding statistics on: claims approved vs. declined, which counties are most proactive in getting veterans benefits, and the breakdown of county vs. claims and/or organization vs. claims. The USDVA only breaks down claims by service organizations, statistics for claims submitted to

the USDVA are skewed due to veterans processing claims in counties other than their own and organizations processing claims through other states.

Regarding outreach Director Espich stated Ohio is at ground zero, the cost of a welcome home packet, a strategic plan, PSAs or even a newsletter cannot be covered under the current budget support. Many individual counties have their own outreach programs.

August 6th is the next Council meeting

Adjournment:

Motioned by William Miller, seconded by Jonathan Warmeling, accepted unanimously.

Subcommittees proceeded to breakout rooms. Please advise the Chairman of the selected spokesperson and have someone take notes.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday August 6, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Robert Kimball, American Legion
Donald Lanthorn, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Herb Greff, Jewish War Veterans
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator John Bocchieri
Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

William Eberle, Marine Corps League
Karen Kish, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Stan Weigman, Ohio Veterans Home
Senator Gene Watts
Robert Park, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Matt Lampke, AAG
Carl Swisher, American Legion
William Selby, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Thomas Storer, Clark County Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Andy Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Wade Rakes, Governor's Office
Kathy Wellington, Representative Ujvagi's Office
Ed Zoretic, Korean War Veterans
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Teresa Laux, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Jim McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Doug LeValley, Clark County Veterans Service Office
Todd Weber, Cleveland VA Regional Office

Absent:

MG Harry A.J. Feucht, Adjutant General's Office

Senator Robert Spada

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Frank Williams and seconded by William Miller).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by Rebecca Lee and seconded by William Seagraves).

Bills and Communications:

A letter is needed from the Army Navy Union and the Marine Corps League in reference to the change verbally mentioned with the alternates assigned.

A letter has been received from the Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners assigning Dan Weist as the primary, Robert Stewart as the alternate and Michael Stith as the second alternate.

An email was received from the AMVETS office appointing Don Lanthorn as their second alternate. Don will represent the AMVETS at this meeting and his American Legion alternate will represent the American Legion.

Old Business:

Subcommittee Spokespersons were identified.

Subcommittee 1 – Projected Services

Chair – Senator Spada

Vice Chair – Jon Warmeling (OSACVSO)

Subcommittee 2 – Enhance Veterans Benefits

Spokesperson – William Miller (AG)

Subcommittee 3 – Evaluate Other States' Structure

Chair & Spokesperson – William Boettcher (AMVETS)

Subcommittee 4 – Current Services Provided

Chair – MG Feucht

Spokesperson – Senator Boccieri

New Business:

Second breakout session – Chairman Pratt informed the subcommittees not to be too extensive in their details on the reports. A handout was provided regarding the format of the final report. Please provide 2-3 recommendations and brief action steps.

Bill McLemore, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental & International Affairs – The United States Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Process

Deputy Assistant Secretary McLemore's biography was provided. Throughout the discussion the Deputy Assistant Secretary referred to the 'study' (Analysis of Differences in Disability Compensation in the Department of Veterans Affairs, report prepared by the Institute for Defense Analyses).

The study consists of consolidated data from the last 35 years. Ohio is last among the 50 states in the average dollars received for compensation claimed. Three components impact the statistics: the mix of eligible veterans, the rate of filing claims, and the adjudication process. The only component that the state can impact is the rate of filing claims. Per the study the states with more funds for the veterans have higher rates, more Power of Attorneys and a partnership between the USDVA and state services (i.e. accredited officers at the regional offices and VA Medical Centers for observation) equal better results. The expenditure report within the study does not include pension, emergency assistance or medical care.

The USDVA has three different areas of claim processing: initial claim, increase claim, and previously denied and re-opened claim. When veterans move from county to county or state to state the Regional Office must begin gathering records all over again. Currently the VA has a backlog of approximately 800,000 claims.

The Cleveland Regional Office takes in approximately 2200 claims per month. Their efficiency rating is at 85% while many other Regional Offices are well above 100%. New leadership is coming into the Cleveland Regional Office and the office just hired 24 and next month will hire 20 more new rating officers. It will take 2-3 years to train/qualify. Todd Webber, of the Cleveland Regional Office, noted that the new rating officers will be placed on basic cases during their training period to assist with backlog.

Ohio only has about 60% of applying veterans represented by a Power of Attorney. The state needs a relationship with the Regional Office and to have a presence at the facilities. Ohio knows the laws and has more qualified County Veterans Service Officers than other states. Ohio needs to submit more claims to increase their ratings.

Concerns of the council include:

How will more applications/claims help Ohio when Ohio is already so far behind?

Why do veterans in Ohio with the same claim/problem as another veteran (inside or outside of Ohio) receive a different percentage of compensation?

Two years is unacceptable, how do you tell a veteran that they must wait two more years for their rating?

Representative Fessler asked the Deputy Assistant Secretary to define the problem and to give the solution. The Deputy Assistant Secretary noted that the problem is that Ohio is concerned with Ohio being the last in the study and the solution is Ohio needs to review reports of other states and what they do. Fessler wants the federal laws or administrative rules that are considered to be an impediment to the time the VA turns around an application and details and information on the training and accreditations for the rating officers. The Deputy Assistant Secretary agreed to supply her with the requested information.

August 20th is the next Council meeting

Adjournment:

Motioned by Jonathan Warmeling, seconded by William Miller, accepted unanimously.

Subcommittees proceeded to breakout rooms.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday August 20, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Don Lanthorn, American Legion
William Boettcher, AMVETS
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
Mel Heis, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Ron Miller, Vietnam Veterans of America
BG Jack Lee, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator Robert Spada
Representative Diana Fessler
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Senator Gene Watts
Jim McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (Alternate)
William Eberle, Marine Corps League (Alternate)
James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (Alternate)
Linda Jacobsen, LSC
Robert Ultsch
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Michael Dittoe, Representative Fessler's Office
Doug LeValley, Clark County Veterans Service Office
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Olga Hesch, Senator John Boccieri's Office
Albert Dowden, Army & Navy Union USA

Absent:

Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans (Orientation & National Convention)
Art Kamlet, Jewish War Veterans (National Convention)
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars (National Convention)
Senator John Boccieri
Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Roger Tackett and seconded by Frank Williams).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by William Boettcher and seconded by Dan Weist).

Bills and Communications:

A letter was received from the Army Navy Union appointed Jack Decker as the primary representative and Michelle Covert as the alternate.

A letter was received from the Marine Corps League appointed William Eberle as the alternate to John Maurer.

A letter has been received from the Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners assigning Dan Weist as the primary, Robert Stewart as the alternate and Michael Stith as the second alternate.

An email from the Catholic War Veterans noted they will not be present due to their National Convention.

An email from Olga Hesch of Senator Bocchieri's office noting she will be sitting in for the Senator.

An email from the VFW noted they will not be present due to their National Convention.

An email from the Jewish War Veterans noted they will not be present due to their National Convention.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

The Ohio Legislative Process – Linda Jacobsen from the Legislative Services Committee gave a short presentation about legislative process (slides attached).

September 4th is the next Council meeting

Adjournment:

Motioned by William Boettcher, seconded by Jon Warmeling, accepted unanimously.

Subcommittees proceeded to breakout rooms.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Tuesday September 4, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Don Lanthorn, American Legion
William Boettcher, AMVETS
Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Jim McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Art Kamlet, Jewish War Veterans
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
BG Jack Lee, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator Robert Spada
Senator John Boccieri
Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

Robert Kimball, American Legion (Alternate)
Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Terry Worst
George Ondick, AMVETS (Alternate)
Michael Morris
Sara Hall Phillips, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Ron Miller
Michael Dittoe, Representative Fessler's Office
Robert Park, GOVA Advisory Committee (Alternate)
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (Alternate)
Paul Teasley, Hannah News
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Olga Hesch, Senator John Boccieri's Office
Matthew Lampke, Attorney General's Office (Alternate)
Albert Dowden, Army & Navy Union USA

Absent:

Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Frank Williams and seconded by William Boettcher).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by William Miller and seconded by Dan Weist).

Bills and Communications:

An email from the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers noting Alternate James MacAuliffe would be present, sitting in for the Primary Jonathan Warmeling.

An email from the Adjutant General's Office noting Alternate BG Jack Lee would be present, sitting in for the Primary MG Feucht.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Brief-back / reports will begin at the next meeting. Following discussion on the status of the subcommittees Chairman Pratt announced that Subcommittees 1 and 3 will be presenting on September 17th and Subcommittees 2 and 4 will be presenting on October 1st. If this poses a problem please notify Chairman Pratt as soon as possible.

September 17th is the next Council meeting

Adjournment:

Motioned by Senator Spada, seconded by William Miller, accepted unanimously.

Subcommittees proceeded to breakout rooms.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday September 17, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Don Lanthorn, American Legion
William Boettcher, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Art Kamlet, Jewish War Veterans
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator Robert Spada
Senator John Boccieri
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
William Eberle, Marine Corps League (Alternate)
Robert Park, GOVA Advisory Committee (Alternate)
James McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (Alternate)
Krista Bistline, OCSEA
Paul Teasley, Hannah News
Matthew Lampke, Attorney General's Office (Alternate)
George Ondick, AMVETS (Alternate)
Terry Worst, SAA/ODE, Vet Training
Kathy Wellington, Representative Peter Ujvagi's Office
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Wade Rakes, Governor's Office
Sara Hall Phillips, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
Michael Dittoe, Representative Fessler's Office
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (Alternate)
Karen Kish, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Stan Weigman, Ohio Veterans Home
Olga Hesch, Senator John Boccieri's Office

Absent:

Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Frank Williams and seconded by William Boettcher).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by William Seagraves and seconded by Dan Weist).

Bills and Communications:

An email from Ronald Miller, alternate for Vietnam Veterans of America, was received. He will not be in attendance due to illness.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Brief-back and discussion / Subcommittee Reports

Subcommittee 1 – Projected Services

Senator Spada, Jon Warmeling (Alt. James McAuliffe), Arminda Crawford (Alt. Paul Wade), Roger Tackett (Alt. Robert Parks), Dan Weist (Alt. Robert Stewart/Michael Stith), and Mel Heis (Alt. John Erby)

Attached recommendations were provided. Discussion followed. Don Lanthorn inquired on the role of the Veterans Service Organizations. The Subcommittee noted they do not want to change what the organizations currently do but they do want them to work closer with the future state department of veterans' affairs, the format and direction of the relationship would be up to the department director. Roger Tackett added that marketing needs to be enhanced to better notify veterans of available benefits. The subcommittee recommended overall that the department would keep the duties currently held by the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs within the Ohio Revised Code 5902 with the addition of those items listed in their attached recommendations.

Subcommittee 3 – Evaluate other states' structure

William Boettcher (Alt. George Ondick), Don Lanthorn (Alt. Robert Kimball), Dr. Art Kamlet (Alt. Herb Greff/Saul Laub), Thomas Burke (Alt. Ronald Miller), Rep Peter Ujvagi

Attached recommendations were provided. Discussion followed. It is recommended that the Ohio National Guard (ONG) be handled separately. Discussion continued on the status of a guardsman regarding benefits. It was confirmed that this would need to be verified and fully understood prior to changes in creating a veterans' affairs department. Tim Espich added currently the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs has no control over the ONG members, they do overlap and assist and currently have a strong relationship with the Adjutant General's Department.

Thomas Burke added that the incarcerated veterans were not addressed in the subcommittee report. Currently there are approximately 4,000-5,000 veterans in the prison system (sentenced to six or more months for felony convictions), what happens with these veterans affects the state budget. Currently the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs, VA, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections are spearheading a system to follow a veteran through the prison system in order to assist them when they are released with employment, housing and retrieving their veterans' benefits. Currently the VVA has ten incarcerated chapters and they receive countless letters from those incarcerated that will be homeless once released. Where should this be discussed? This is an ongoing problem. OIF/OEF veterans are beginning to enter the prison systems, PTSD is increasing with these veterans due to the type of war they are fighting and the multiple deployments they face. John Maurer agreed that this is a distinct sub-group that needs special assistance; Jon Warmeling also agreed that it would need to also go under the Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs. It was also noted that Tim Espich is doing great work to connect the incarcerated veterans with the

appropriate county service officers. Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Office is now connecting with service workers to establish links with those veterans that are now returning to society and supplying them with security deposits and funds for six months to get them back on their feet. Dan Weist noted that this 'pilot program' is working well for them.

Merle Pratt announced that October 1st is the next Council meeting. Subcommittees 2 and 4 will provide brief backs at that time. The building of the final report will begin at the October 15th meeting. Please modify or add, at will, during this process to assist with moving forward on the recommendations as a whole.

Jon Warmeling requested feedback from Representative Fessler regarding a letter she mailed out to each of the County Veterans Service Officers. The letter requests the following materials: a printout of the number of service-related claims, a printout of the salaries of each service officer, commissioner and director, a list of how many full board meetings held each month in the last year, and information on how long each commissioner has served in their position. Jon Warmeling would like Representative Fessler to reply as to the purpose of the request. Representative Fessler was not in attendance to provide a response. Merle Pratt noted that several counties are replying to the request according to law.

Representative John Boccieri mentioned that his subcommittee has discussed funding for the organizations but he will wait to share with the committee as a whole at the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Motioned by Senator Spada, seconded by Jonathan Warmeling, accepted unanimously.

Subcommittees proceeded to breakout rooms.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday October 1, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Robert Kimball, American Legion
William Boettcher, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Art Kamlet, Jewish War Veterans
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Robert Funk, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator John Boccieri
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Olga Hesch, Senator John Boccieri's Office
William Eberle, Marine Corps League (Alternate)
Stan Weigman, Ohio Veterans Home
Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Robert Creel, Department of Labor
Terry Worst, SAA/ODE, Vet Training
Robert Park, GOVA Advisory Committee (Alternate)
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (Alternate)
James McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (Alternate)
Ronald Miller, Vietnam Veterans of America (Alternate)
Senator Eugene Watts
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Wade Rakes, Governor's Office
Kathy Wellington, Representative Peter Ujvagi's Office
Sara Hall Phillips, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
Paul Teasley, Hannah News
John Porter, Ohio civil Service Employees Assoc. (OCSEA)
George Ondick, AMVETS (Alternate)
Donald Lanthorn, American Legion

Absent:

Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Senator Robert Spada
Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Jonathan Warmeling and seconded by Frank Williams).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by William Boettcher and seconded by William Miller).

Bills and Communications:

An email from Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans, was received. She will not be in attendance due to her son returning from Iraq.

An email from Michael Dittoe, Representative Fessler's Office, was received. The Representative will not be in attendance.

A phone call from Dan Weist's Office, County Veteran Service Commissioners, was received. He will not be in attendance, currently in route from Texas.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Brief-back and discussion / Subcommittee Reports

Subcommittee 2 – Enhance Veterans Benefits

Rebecca Lee (Alt. Margie Pettibone), Frank Williams, John Maurer (Alt. William Eberle), William Miller, Representative Diana Fessler

Attached recommendations were provided. Recommendations were provided by the majority, one member, Representative Fessler, disagreed with recommendations. Discussion followed. The .5 mill issue was discussed at length; concern if the funds go solely to veterans, the programs that currently benefit from the funds will suffer. Law should be reviewed regarding the restrictions on these funds, possibly bring in tax specialists.

Subcommittee 4 – Current Services Provided

Senator Boccieri, MG Feucht, Jack Decker, Charles Cole, William Seagraves

Attached recommendations were provided. Discussion followed. ODVA becoming the clearinghouse for veterans' benefits and the creation of regional districts were discussed at length and were tabled until the next meeting.

Merle Pratt announced that October 15th is the next Council meeting and the building of the final report will begin at that time. The Council will modify, add or delete language during this process to assist with moving forward on the recommendations as a whole. There must be a consensus in what we provide the Governor; a two-thirds majority of the council must agree.

John Maurer noted that the Marine Corp League representatives will not be in attendance for the November 13th meeting due to OPERS and Service Officer duties.

Adjournment:

Motioned by Frank Williams, seconded by Jonathan Warmeling, accepted unanimously.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday October 15, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in room 1960, 19th Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Donald Lanthorn, American Legion
George Ondick, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Saul Laub, Jewish War Veterans
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
William Eberle, Marine Corps League
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator Robert Spada
Senator John Boccieri
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Robert Park, GOVA Advisory Committee (Alternate)
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
James McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (Alternate)
Olga Hesch, Senator John Boccieri's Office
Doug LeValley, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Ronald Miller, Vietnam Veterans of America (Alternate)
Michael Dittoe, Representative Fessler's Office
Ray Teter, Pickaway County Veterans Service Commission Driver
Bill Schmidt, American Ex-Prisoners of War
Robert Creel, Department of Labor
George Crawford, Catholic War Veterans

Absent:

Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Saul Laub and seconded by Frank Williams).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by William Miller and seconded by Daniel Weist).

Bills and Communications:

None

Old Business:

Thomas Burke of the Vietnam Veterans of America provided the attached information regarding incarcerated veterans. 'Incarcerated Veterans Program' was added to the list of those items to include under ODVA for consideration.

New Business:**Recommendation Approval**

Discussion proceeded to finalize recommendations for the creation of a state department. Recommendation approval was conducted for Marketing and the Creation of the Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs. Eight votes were conducted, preceded and followed by committee discussion. The following are the votes and outcome:

Vote #1 – To include: 'develop, produce, and distribute statewide marketing programs to assist in advising veterans on benefits' in the final recommendations

- William Miller motioned, Daniel Weist seconded

Passed 16-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio Senate – Minority, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House - Minority

Vote #2 – To include: 'recommendation to establish an Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs with a cabinet level Director' in the final recommendations

- Roger Tackett motioned, John Erby seconded

Passed 16-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio Senate – Minority, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House - Minority

Vote #3 – To combine and include: 'absorption/assimilation of all veteran related programs within the State of Ohio and have complete operational control and authority over all state programs and federal funding pertinent to veterans' affairs and oversight of government entities purported to assist veterans and/or their dependents with all programs and activities being handled under the umbrella of one office, centralizing the accountability and tracking of all services provided to Ohio's veterans from any source' in the final recommendations

- Senator Robert Spada motioned, Frank Williams seconded

Passed 16-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service

Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio Senate – Minority, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House - Minority

Vote #4 – To combine and include: 'ODVA should establish agreements with other agencies – ODJFS, Adjutant General, etc, to ensure that all veterans are provided access to benefit information, ODVA will work closely with the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs to track federal benefits being provided to Ohio's veterans and their dependants and will contract for the same if necessary. ODVA will be given statutory authority to maintain all DD214s. ODVA will be given authority to require all state and county agencies and nursing homes, to screen all veterans or veterans' dependants to determine their status. Establishment of an ODVA Advisory Board, the Governor's Women Veterans Advisory Committee be given statutory appointment and a seat on the ODVA Advisory Board if it is established' in the final recommendations

- Frank Williams motioned, Thomas Burke seconded

Passed 17-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority, Ohio Senate – Minority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House - Minority

Vote #5 – To include: 'The Ohio National Guard should be kept separate from ODVA' in the final recommendations

- William Miller motioned, Daniel Weist seconded

Passed 17-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority, Ohio Senate – Minority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House - Minority

Vote #6 – Remove: 'Legislative function both on the state and federal level to initiate needed new legislation, to repeal conflicting and/or outdated, irrelevant legislation' from recommendations

- Senator Robert Spada motioned, William Miller seconded

Passed 17-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority, Ohio Senate – Minority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House - Minority

Vote #7 – To include: ‘Conduct a comprehensive veteran population count in state agencies’ in the final recommendations

- George Ondick motioned, William Miller seconded

Failed 10-7

For: AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Disabled American Veterans, Governor’s Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, The Attorney General’s Office, Ohio Senate – Minority

Against: American Legion, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, GOVA Advisory Committee, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General’s Office, Ohio Senate – Majority

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House – Minority

Vote #8 – Include under ODVA: GOVA duties, Education, Training Programs (VSO/VSC Training & Accreditation/Certification), War Orphans Scholarship, DVOPS/LVRS, Ceremonies, Hall of Fame, Veterans Home, Grants Writing, Legislative Liaison, Compliance Monitoring, Marketing, Employment, Incarcerated Veterans Program along with a ‘catch all’ for any programs not mentioned. Include this in the final recommendations

- William Miller motioned, Saul Laub seconded

Passed 16-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor’s Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General’s Office, The Attorney General’s Office, Ohio Senate – Majority, Ohio Senate – Minority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House - Minority

.5 Mill

History was provided by Don Lanthorn and Dan Weist provided a packet on previous testimony. Topic was tabled until the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Motioned by Frank Williams, seconded by Daniel Weist, accepted unanimously.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday, October 29, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Robert Kimball, American Legion
George Ondick, AMVETS
George Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Herb Greff, Jewish War Veterans
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator Robert Spada
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
James McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (Alternate)
Ronald Miller, Vietnam Veterans of America (Alternate)
Joseph Andry, Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services
Robert Creel, Department of Labor
Robert Park, GOVA Advisory Committee (Alternate)
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (Alternate)
Bill Schmidt, American Ex-Prisoners of War
Karen Kish, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Sara Hall Phillips, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
Olga Hesch, Senator John Bocchieri's Office
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Kathy Wellington, Representative Ujvagi's Office
Terry Worst, SAA/ODE, Vet Training
Mike Moses, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers

Absent:

Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
Mel Heis, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Senator John Bocchieri
Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Frank Williams and seconded by Dan Weist).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by Jonathan Warmeling and seconded by Herb Greff).

Bills and Communications:

Jack Decker of the Army & Navy Union submitted an email, he will not be in attendance.

Olga Hesch of Senator Bocchieri's office submitted an email, the Senator will not be in attendance.

A letter from Arminda Crawford, Commander of the Catholic War Veterans was received; her 2nd alternate is George Crawford.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Recommendation Approval

Discussion proceeded to finalize recommendations for the creation of a state department. Recommendation approval was conducted for CVSO – CVSC and Claims & Funding – .5 MILL - Legislation. Two votes were conducted, preceded and followed by committee discussion. The following are the votes and outcome:

Vote #1 – To include: 'central clearinghouse for oversight of CVSO's and state workers related to delivering veterans benefits; Individual county veterans service commissions and veterans service offices will maintain their individuality, control their own funding, and manage their own internal business under the provisions of Title 59, ORC; ODVA would have oversight responsibility and authority to ensure that commissioners and staff maintain educational requirements, proficiency, and demonstrate good service provision to clientele; ODVA will provide more oversight, authority and control over all training and accreditation for County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) and County Veteran Service Commissioners (CVSCs); ODVA will establish uniform reporting standards for all CVSOs and CVSCs; Give ODVA authority to recommend corrective steps, up to and including removal of accreditation of any CVSO or CVSC in the most egregious cases of non-compliance. ODVA will establish and publish performance standards and penalties for non-compliance; ODVA will improve training of CVSOs and CVSCs. Web-based training should be created and offered as alternative training to some existing mandated continuing education requirements; All CVSOs and CVSCs must meet all mandated continuing education and uniform reporting requirements, as directed by ODVA, or face removal of accreditation on a case-by-case basis'

- Herb Greff motioned, Daniel Weist seconded

Passed 15-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Catholic War Veterans, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority
Against: None

Absent – n/a: Army & Navy Union, Korean War Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio Senate – Minority, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House - Minority

Vote #2 – To remove: 'funding - .5 mill – legislation' section from recommendations

- William Miller motioned, John Maurer seconded

Passed 15-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Catholic War Veterans, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Army & Navy Union, Korean War Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Ohio Senate – Minority, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House – Minority

Adjournment:

Motioned by John Maurer, seconded by Frank Williams, accepted unanimously.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday, November 5, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Donald Lanthorn, American Legion
George Ondick, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Saul Laub, Jewish War Veterans
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
William Eberle, Marine Corps League
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator Robert Spada
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

Robert Park, GOVA Advisory Committee (Alternate)
James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Tim Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Olga Hesch, Senator John Boccieri's Office
Bill Schmidt, American Ex-Prisoners of War
Robert Kimball, American Legion
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Matt Lampke, Attorney General's Office (Alternate)

Absent:

Armina Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Senator John Boccieri
Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Senator Spada and seconded by Dan Weist).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by Thomas Burke and seconded by Frank Williams).

Bills and Communications:

A letter from Armina Crawford, Commander of the Catholic War Veterans was received; she will not be in attendance.

Olga Hesch of Senator Boccieri's office submitted an email, the Senator will not be in attendance.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Completion of the language for the final report

Vote #1 – For the Chairman to select a five person subcommittee to create the verbiage for the final report and present the report to the full council at the next meeting to review. An Amendment was added to wait until after this meeting to determine if more language corrections are needed, then the Chairperson can select the subcommittee.

- George Ondick motioned, William Miller seconded, Amended by Senator Spada

Passed 12-4

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Disabled American Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Majority

Against: Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Vietnam Veterans of America,

Absent – n/a: Catholic War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio Senate – Minority, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House – Minority

Discussion followed regarding the Draft 1 copy of the report. Agreed upon was that the final paragraph under 'Executive Summary' would be deleted, that all of the recommendations would begin with 'to...' and that the current #5 would become #14 and the current #8 would become #13. The current #8-#14 proved to be problematic. Concern exists regarding the recommendations dealing with CVSO/CVSC. Possibly too many points focused on those areas and the points overlap and contradict one another. Discussion followed.

Chairman Pratt selected five members to be on the sub-committee and supply the Council as a whole with the language for the final report on November 26th for review. Those five were: Don Lanthorn (American Legion), William Miller (Attorney General's Office), Daniel Weist (Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Commissioners), Jonathan Warmeling (Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers), and Senator Spada, Senate Majority. The subcommittee will select a chairperson.

Next meeting is scheduled for November 26th from 2-4 p.m.

Adjournment:

Motioned by Saul Laub, seconded by Charles Cole, accepted unanimously.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday November 26, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in the South B&C conference room, 31st Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Donald Lanthorn, American Legion
Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator John Boccieri
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

Ed Zoretic, Korean War Veterans
William Schmidt, Ex-POWs
Terry Worst, SAA/ODE, Vet Training
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Sara Hall Phillips, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
James Forster, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Paul Teasley, Hannah News
Joe Andry, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
Karen Kish, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Robert Park, OSACVSO
Dorinda Johnston, USDOL/VETS
Olga Hesch, Senator John Boccieri's Office
Veronica Hampton, Ohio Department of Education

Absent:

William Boettcher, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Art Kamlet, Jewish War Veterans
Charles Cole, Korean War Veterans
John Maurer, Marine Corps League
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Senator Robert Spada
Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Daniel Weist and seconded by Frank Williams).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by Thomas Burke and seconded by William Miller).

Bills and Communications:

An email from George Ondick, AMVETS, was received. He and William Boettcher will not be in attendance.

An email from Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union, was received. He will not be in attendance due to illness and will attempt to reach his alternate.

Old Business:

None

New Business:**Review of the Final Draft Subcommittee's proposed language**

Final Draft Subcommittee's recommended report is attached.

A vote was attempted to accept points 8-13 presented in the new language. It was agreed that points 1-7 and 14 were voted on and accepted at the previous meeting. Don Lanthorn requested numbers 10 and 12 be set aside for separate consideration. It was determined that the 12 in attendance was not enough to meet a quorum (14 are needed). Discussion followed in regards to changing the language presented for points 10 and 12. The following language was agreed upon and will be presented at the next meeting for a vote:

#10 will be changed to read as the following:

'To require that all personnel providing VA claim services to veterans of the State of Ohio must meet continuing educational requirements and certifications; either federal, veterans service organizations and/or state.'

#12 will be changed to read as the following:

'To ensure that in the event personnel providing services to the veterans of the State of Ohio are found to be in non-compliance with the mandates of Ohio Law, ODVA shall have the authority to recommend corrective action.'

The next meeting is December 10th on the 19th floor of the Riffe Tower in room 1960.

Adjournment:

Motioned by Thomas Burke, seconded by William Miller, accepted unanimously.

VETERANS STUDY COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Monday December 10, 2007

Chairman Merle Pratt convened the meeting at 2 p.m. in room 1960, 19th Floor, Riffe Tower, 77 S High Street, Columbus, Ohio. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

In Attendance:

Merle Pratt, Chairperson
Donald Lanthorn, American Legion
William Boettcher, AMVETS
Jack Decker, Army & Navy Union USA
Arminda Crawford, Catholic War Veterans
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Frank Williams, Disabled American Veterans
Rebecca Lee, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Roger Tackett, G.O.V.A. Advisory Committee
Art Kamlet, Jewish War Veterans
Ed Zoretic, Korean War Veterans
William Eberle, Marine Corps League
John Erby, Military Order of the Purple Heart
William Seagraves, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Dan Weist, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners
Thomas Burke, Vietnam Veterans of America
MG Harry Feucht, Adjutant General's Office
William Miller, Attorney General's Office
Senator Robert Spada
Senator John Bocchieri
April Philopoulos, Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Visitors:

Timothy Espich, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
James Forester, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Paul Teasley, Hannah News
William Schmidt, Ex-POWs
Andrew Thompson, Governor's Office
Robert Park, OSACVSO
Olga Hesch, Senator John Bocchieri's Office
James McAuliffe, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (Alternate)
Senator Eugene Watts
David Jenkinson, Veteran
Terry Worst, SAA/ODE, Vet Training
George Ondick, AMVETS (Alternate)
Stan Weigman, Ohio Veterans Home
Joseph Andry, Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services
Michelle Covert, Army & Navy Union (Alternate)
Dorinda Johnston, USDOL/VETS
Eddie Reed, USDOL/VETS
Robert Kimball, American Legion
Andrew Pusateri, Senator Spada's Office
Karen Kish, Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Sara Hall Phillips, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
Margi Pettibone, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (Alternate)
Wade Rakes, Governor's Office

Absent:

Representative Diana Fessler
Representative Peter Ujvagi

The Minutes were accepted unanimously (motioned by Frank Williams and seconded by William Miller).

The Agenda was approved (motioned by William Boettcher and seconded by Jonathan Warmeling).

Bills and Communications:

A letter was received by the Korean War Veterans Association, President Robert McGeorge. Ed Zoretic has been appointed to the Veterans Study Council.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Recommendation Approval

Jonathan Warmeling recommended returning a previous recommendation back to the report. This recommendation was accepted by the council and the returned recommendation was worded "to ensure individual county veterans service commissions and veterans service offices will maintain their individuality, control their own funding, and manage their own internal business under the provisions of Title 59, ORC" and inserted as recommendation number 14.

One vote was conducted, preceded and followed by committee discussion. The following is the vote and outcome:

Vote #1 – To accept recommendations 1-15 – including those listed as 1-14 in Draft 3 of the report and inserting #14 as recommended by Jon Warmeling.

- William Boettcher motioned, William Miller seconded

Passed 18-0

For: American Legion, AMVETS, Army & Navy Union, Catholic War Veterans, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers, Disabled American Veterans, Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, GOVA Advisory Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Adjutant General's Office, The Attorney General's Office, Ohio Senate – Minority

Against: None

Absent – n/a: Ohio Senate – Majority, Ohio House – Majority, Ohio House – Minority

Wade Rakes informed the council that this report will make a substantive impact on how the state will be doing things. The Council will present the report to the Governor as a group.

The next step will be for the Governor's staff and/or another council to discuss and determine the department's structure, funding, and draft the legislation. This will be a lengthy process.

Adjournment:

Motioned by Ed Zoretic, seconded by William Miller, accepted unanimously.