

Legislative Update

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Legislative proposals for the 2021 General Assembly Session included 15 House and eight Senate Veteran and Military friendly initiatives. There were a number of Resolutions and Joint Resolutions introduced in both Chambers as well. Just over half of the introduced legislation moved forward through crossover into the 2021 Special Session, 12 of which became enrolled for approval.

New laws going into effect July 1, 2021 include enriching services for transitioning service members, veterans and spouses. An amendment to the Code of Virginia, relating to the Department of Veterans Services' Military Medics and Corpsmen Program (MMAC), will expand the types of facilities able to participate in the program, allowing for increased pathways to employment for transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses. VDVS transition services and initiatives, codified in the code of Virginia, promote strategies and services for connecting transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses to local, regional, state, and federal employment resources. Legislation passing both the House and Senate establishes the position of a Military Spouse Liaison within VDVS to advocate on behalf of military spouses in the Commonwealth.

The enacting legislation for the referendum, passed by Virginia voters in November 2020 allowing for personal property tax exemption on one motor vehicle for a veteran with a 100 percent service-connected, permanent and total, Veteran Affairs disability rating goes into effect July 1, 2021.

Two new laws remove the fee for issuance of a special license plate for current and retired members of the Virginia National Guard, and several initiatives for special license plates reflecting military decorations will soon become law as well. The quantity of land that any association or post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Spanish War Veterans, Disabled American Veterans, or any similar association of veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States increases from 75 to 200 acres July 1, 2021. Finally, companion legislation in the House and Senate would prohibit discrimination in public accommodations, employment, and housing, based on a person's military status. This bill is enrolled pending the action deadline of March 31, 2021.