

STATE and LOCAL LEVEL VETERANS ISSUES STUDY COMMITTEE

REPORT



MARCH 1, 2016

Committee Members:

Representative James E. Smith, Chairman
Senator Thomas C. Alexander, Vice Chairman
Senator Paul G. Campbell, Jr.
Senator Lawrence "Larry" K. Grooms
Representative Michael A. Pitts
Representative F. Michael "Mike" Sottile
Mr. Carey D. Bolt, US Army (Ret.)
Cpt. Daniel C. Hennigan (Ret.)
Maj. William L. Jowers (Ret.)
Lt. Gen. Jack S. Klump (Ret.)
Col. Ronald F. Taylor
CSM John W. Witt (Ret.)

Staff:

Ava Brumfield

MARCH 1, 2016 REPORT

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STUDY COMMITTEE

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- i. Act 127 of 2015 - Establishing the State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee
- ii. H.4573 - Legislation to extend the State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

President Pro-Tempore Appointees:

Senator Thomas C. Alexander

Senator Paul G. Campbell, Jr.

Senator Lawrence K. Grooms

Speaker of the House Appointees:

Representatives Michael A. Pitts

Representative James E. Smith, Jr.

Representative F. Michael Sottile

Governor Appointees:

Mr. Carey D. Bolt, US Army (Ret.),

Cpt. Daniel C. Hennigan, (Ret.)

Maj. William L. Jowers, (Ret.)

Adjutant General Appointees:

Lt. Gen. Jack S. Klimp, (Ret.)

Col. Ronald F. Taylor

CSM John W. Witt, (Ret.)

I. INTRODUCTION

The State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee was established by authority of Act 127 of 2015 with the report submission deadline of February 1, 2016. The Committee's membership is comprised of twelve members which includes the members of the Joint Legislative Veterans Issues Study Committee created by Act 342 of 2010, appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. The other six members were appointed by the Governor and the Adjutant General. Those appointed are: Senators Thomas C. Alexander, Paul G. Campbell, Jr., Lawrence K. Grooms; Representatives Michael A. Pitts, James E. Smith, Jr., F. Michael Sottile; Mr. Carey D. Bolt, US Army (Ret.), Cpt. Daniel C. Hennigan (Ret.), Maj. William L. Jowers (Ret.); and Lt. Gen. Jack S. Klimp, (Ret.), Col. Ronald F. Taylor and CSM John W. Witt (Ret.).

The overall focus of the State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee is to evaluate the following:

1. Relationships between the county veterans affairs offices and the executive and legislative branches of state government;
2. Relationships between the county veterans affairs offices and the South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs;
3. Relationships between the South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;
4. Level of responsiveness and accountability of the current state system for the delivery of services to South Carolina veterans;
5. Range of services the State of South Carolina directly offers state veterans and recommendations for enhancing South Carolina's veterans-friendly reputation; and
6. Current mission of the Joint Legislative Veterans Issues Study Committee and whether its functions should be expanded or codified.

The election of the officers occurred at the initial meeting where Representative James E. Smith, Jr. was elected to serve as Chairman and Senator Thomas C. Alexander was elected to serve as Vice-Chairman. The Committee members familiarized themselves with the issues as stated in the Act and the immediate need to introduce legislation to extend the Committee's report submission date to the Governor and both Houses of the General Assembly. The Committee also reiterated the need to expand the State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee until 2026. This expansion will require the Committee to render reports to the Governor and the General Assembly by March first of each even-numbered year until 2026 at which time the Committee must be dissolved unless extended by an act of the General Assembly. Therefore, as requested by the Committee, Chairman James Smith introduced House Bill 4573 that will address these concerns and extend the due date for this initial report to March 1, 2016. At the time of this report, H.4573 adopted by the House and is now residing in the Senate's Committee on General.

II METHODOLOGY

The State and Local Level Issues Study Committee is in the process of receiving presentations from state and local level veterans' organizations. To date, the following organizations have made presentations:

1) South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Howard Metcalf, Director:

The South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs' presentation included the Division's mission program description and organizational structure. Questions and comments included, but not limited to, the need of additional resources, FTE's (full-time-employees), accountability reports from counties, and mechanisms to ascertain the veteran population in South Carolina.

2) South Carolina National Guard, Col. Ronald Taylor, J1 Human Resource Office/Service Member and Family Care, S.C. National Guard:

The South Carolina National Guard's presentation provided information on various programs offered. The presentation also included a proposal for Service Member and Family Care Centers in each of the seven Congressional Districts. Questions and comments included, but were not limited to, services provided for veterans representing all branches of the military, connectivity, location of care centers, public service announcements, and other publicity to ensure veterans are aware of its various programs.

3) Laurens/Greenwood Veterans Affairs, Rep. Michael Pitts and Mr. Carey Bolt, US Army (Ret.):

The Laurens/Greenwood Veterans Affairs' presentation included an overview of the Laurens/Greenwood Veterans Affairs County Office success in combining the two county offices, the need to clarify S.C. Code section 25-11-40, and their collaborative efforts with Lander University. Questions and comments included, but were not limited to, examining VSOs position qualifications as it pertains to Standard Operational Procedure, and training certification.

4) S.C. Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers Presentation, Todd Humphries, Vice President:

The South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers' presentation included an overview of the job description for Veterans Affairs Service Officers, particularly Cherokee County; National Association of County Veterans Service Officers Continuing Education Reports, and other information pertaining to training. Concerns about consolidating offices and congressional districts for county veterans' affairs offices were expressed. Questions and comments included, but were not limited to, clarity about the State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee's purpose; inventory of the veteran community, Standard Operating Procedures, uniformity in equipment for counties, and reviewing Title 25 Chapter 11 of the S.C. Code.

5) South Carolina Veterans Advocacy Council Presentation, James Brown, President:

The South Carolina Veterans Advocacy Council's presentation included a summary of its purpose which is to heighten awareness and institute action plans to engage authorities who have

the power to affect laws, statues, rules and recognition for the betterment of all veterans. The presentation also included information on Special Call Meeting Actions; background of S.C. Code Title 25 Chapter 11 referencing Code of Laws from 1962 as it pertain to Division of Veterans Affairs today; and “Rally for Our Veterans.” Emphasis was placed on the need for more visibility of the Veterans Affairs Office, veterans’ goals for this year, and a typical 8:30-5:00 day for a Veterans Affairs Officer was outlined. No questions were asked of the presenter.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee is submitting this report as an initial report with the anticipation of the passage of H.4573, which expands the Committee and changes the reporting date. This recommendation is an effort to better serve those veterans who have served our State as it is imperative for the State to continually review and improve the operations and relationships between the State and Local levels of veterans’ organizations. Veterans need and deserve this vehicle to make certain their voices are heard at the top level in this state, by the Governor, the General Assembly and the Adjutant General.

This Committee has piqued the interest of veteran organizations across the State and many want to be heard. Presentations for the March meetings will address the Base Task Force, and Military Retirement Pay.

APPENDIX

South Carolina General Assembly
121st Session, 2015-2016

A127, R30, H3324

STATUS INFORMATION

Joint Resolution

Sponsors: Reps. J.E. Smith, G.M. Smith, Yow, Hardee, Clemmons, Goldfinch, Hardwick, Johnson, Duckworth, W.J. McLeod and Gilliard

Document Path: I:\council\billsggs\22695zw15.docx

Introduced in the House on January 15, 2015

Introduced in the Senate on March 5, 2015

Last Amended on March 3, 2015

Passed by the General Assembly on May 4, 2015

Governor's Action: May 7, 2015, Signed

Summary: State and local level veterans issues

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Date	Body	Action Description with journal page number
1/15/2015	House	Introduced and read first time (House Journal-page 324)
1/15/2015	House	Referred to Committee on Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs (House Journal-page 324)
1/21/2015	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Yow
2/25/2015	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Hardee, Clemmons, Goldfinch, Hardwick, Johnson, Duckworth
2/25/2015	House	Committee report: Favorable with amendment Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs (House Journal-page 4)
3/3/2015	House	Amended (House Journal-page 33)
3/4/2015	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: W.J.McLeod, Gilliard
3/4/2015	House	Read second time (House Journal-page 20)
3/4/2015	House	Roll call Yeas-98 Nays-3 (House Journal-page 20)
3/5/2015	House	Read third time and sent to Senate (House Journal-page 13)
3/5/2015	Senate	Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal-page 13)
3/5/2015	Senate	Referred to Committee on General (Senate Journal-page 13)
4/23/2015	Senate	Committee report: Favorable General (Senate Journal-page 12)
4/30/2015	Senate	Read second time (Senate Journal-page 25)
4/30/2015	Senate	Roll call Ayes-43 Nays-0 (Senate Journal-page 25)
5/4/2015	Senate	Read third time and enrolled (Senate Journal-page 19)
5/7/2015		Ratified R 30
5/7/2015		Signed By Governor
5/14/2015		Effective date 05/07/15
8/17/2015		Act No. 127

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

[1/15/2015](#)

[2/25/2015](#)

[3/3/2015](#)

[3/4/2015](#)

[4/23/2015](#)

(A127, R30, H3324)

A JOINT RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE TO STUDY STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL VETERANS ISSUES; TO MAKE APPROPRIATE LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE STRUCTURE, DELIVERY, AND COORDINATION OF VETERANS SERVICES IN SOUTH CAROLINA; AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMMITTEE'S MEMBERSHIP, DURATION, AND STAFFING.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee established

SECTION 1. (A) There is established a State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee. The committee is comprised of:

- (1) the members of the Joint Legislative Veterans Issues Study Committee created by Act 342 of 2010 or their successors;
- (2) three members appointed by the Governor; and
- (3) three members appointed by the Adjutant General.

(B) The members of the committee shall elect a chairman and a vice chairman and shall meet as often and at any location in the State as the committee considers necessary or expedient for the duration of the committee's existence as provided by this joint resolution. A vacancy on the committee must be filled in the manner of original appointment.

Duties of the study committee

SECTION 2. The committee shall study and evaluate the following:

- (A) relationships between the county veterans affairs offices and the executive and legislative branches of state government;
- (B) relationships between the county veterans affairs offices and the South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs;
- (C) relationships between the South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;
- (D) level of responsiveness and accountability of the current state system for the delivery of services to South Carolina veterans;
- (E) range of services the State of South Carolina directly offers state veterans and recommendations for enhancing South Carolina's veteran-friendly reputation; and
- (F) current mission of the Joint Legislative Veterans Issues Study Committee and whether its functions should be expanded or codified.

When formulating its findings and recommendations, the committee shall consider information and recommendations from representatives of the veteran community.

Written report and dissolution

SECTION 3. The committee shall render a written report of its findings and recommendations based upon its study conducted pursuant to SECTION 2. The report must be presented to both houses of the General Assembly and to the Governor by February 1, 2016. Upon submitting the written report in accordance with the provisions of this section, the committee must be dissolved and this joint resolution shall expire.

Clerical and administrative assistance

SECTION 4. The committee shall receive clerical and related assistance from the staff of the Military Department of South Carolina, as approved and designated by the Adjutant General. The members of the committee may not receive compensation and are not entitled to receive mileage, subsistence, and per diem authorized by law for members of state boards and committees.

Time effective

SECTION 5. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 7th day of May, 2015.

Approved the 7th day of May, 2015.

South Carolina General Assembly
121st Session, 2015-2016

H. 4573

STATUS INFORMATION

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. J.E. Smith, Clyburn, Hosey, Yow and Douglas

Document Path: l:\council\billsggs\22810zw16.docx

Introduced in the House on January 12, 2016

Introduced in the Senate on January 28, 2016

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **General**

Summary: State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Body</u>	<u>Action Description with journal page number</u>
12/10/2015	House	Prefiled
12/10/2015	House	Referred to Committee on Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs
1/12/2016	House	Introduced and read first time (<u>House Journal-page 109</u>)
1/12/2016	House	Referred to Committee on Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs (<u>House Journal-page 109</u>)
1/13/2016	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Yow
1/20/2016	House	Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Douglas
1/21/2016	House	Recalled from Committee on Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs (<u>House Journal-page 13</u>)
1/26/2016	House	Requests for debate-Rep(s). DC Moss, VS Moss, Norman, Simrill, Hiott, Rivers, Yow, Gagnon, Putnam, Thayer (<u>House Journal-page 29</u>)
1/27/2016	House	Read second time (<u>House Journal-page 68</u>)
1/27/2016	House	Roll call Yeas-98 Nays-5 (<u>House Journal-page 68</u>)
1/28/2016	House	Read third time and sent to Senate (<u>House Journal-page 26</u>)
1/28/2016	Senate	Introduced and read first time (<u>Senate Journal-page 9</u>)
1/28/2016	Senate	Referred to Committee on General (<u>Senate Journal-page 9</u>)

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VERSIONS OF THIS BILL

12/10/2015

1/21/2016

1 RECALLED
2 January 21, 2016

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H. 4573

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6 Introduced by Reps. J.E. Smith, Clyburn, Hosey, Yow and Douglas

7

8 S. Printed 1/21/16--H.

9 Read the first time January 12, 2016.

10

11

12 **STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT**

13 **Fiscal Impact Summary**

14 This bill would have no expenditure impact on the general fund,
15 federal funds, or other funds.

16 **Explanation of Fiscal Impact**

17 **State Expenditure**

18 This bill creates a State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study
19 Committee comprised of members of the Joint Legislative Veterans
20 Issues Study Committee, three members appointed by the Governor,
21 and three members appointed by the Adjutant General.

22 The Governor's Office, the Adjutant General, and the Department
23 of Administration indicate there is no expenditure impact to the
24 general fund, federal funds, or other funds.

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26 Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director

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Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office

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A BILL

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 25-11-100 SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE SUBSTANTIVE PROVISIONS OF ACT 127 OF 2015 RELATING TO THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL VETERANS ISSUES STUDY COMMITTEE, TO EXTEND THE DATE ON WHICH THE STUDY COMMITTEE MUST BE DISSOLVED, AND TO REQUIRE BIENNIAL REPORTS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Act 127 of 2015 are hereby designated as Section 25-11-100 of the 1976 Code.

SECTION 2. Article 1, Chapter 11 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 25-11-100. (A)(1) There is established a State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee. The committee is comprised of:

(a) the members of the Joint Legislative Veterans Issues Study Committee created by Act 342 of 2010 or their successors;

(b) three members appointed by the Governor; and

(c) three members appointed by the Adjutant General.

(2) The members of the committee shall elect a chairman and a vice chairman and shall meet as often and at any location in the State which the committee considers necessary or expedient for the duration of the committee’s existence as provided by this act. A vacancy on the committee must be filled in the manner of original appointment.

(B)(1) The committee shall study and evaluate the following:

1 (a) relationships between the county veterans affairs
2 offices and the executive and legislative branches of state
3 government;

4 (b) relationships between the county veterans affairs
5 offices and the South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs;

6 (c) relationships between the South Carolina Division of
7 Veterans Affairs and the United States Department of Veterans
8 Affairs;

9 (d) level of responsiveness and accountability of the
10 current state system for the delivery of services to South Carolina
11 veterans;

12 (e) range of services the State of South Carolina directly
13 offers state veterans and recommendations for enhancing South
14 Carolina's veteran-friendly reputation; and

15 (f) current mission of the Joint Legislative Veterans Issues
16 Study Committee and whether its functions should be expanded or
17 codified.

18 (2) When formulating its findings and recommendations, the
19 committee shall consider information and recommendations from
20 representatives of the veteran community.

21 (C) The committee shall render a written report of its findings
22 and recommendations based upon its study conducted pursuant to
23 subsection (B). The initial report must be presented to both houses
24 of the General Assembly and to the Governor by March 1, 2016.
25 Thereafter, the committee shall render a written report of its findings
26 and recommendations to both houses of the General Assembly and
27 to the Governor by March first of each succeeding even-numbered
28 year through 2026. Upon submitting the written report due by
29 March 1, 2026, the committee must be dissolved unless extended by
30 an act of the General Assembly.

31 (D) The committee shall receive clerical and related assistance
32 from the staff of the Military Department of South Carolina, as
33 approved and designated by the Adjutant General. The members of
34 the committee may not receive compensation and are not entitled to
35 receive mileage, subsistence, and per diem authorized by law for
36 members of state boards and committees.”

37
38 SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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