



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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RICHMOND, VA 23219

*Air Force Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fleet Reserve Association
Korean War Veterans
Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Officers Association
of America
Military Order of the
World Wars
National Association for
Uniformed Services
Navy Seabee Veterans of
America
Non-Commissioned
Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Officers Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines Association*

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Alternate Revenue Sources for Veterans Programs and Services

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Provide some of the resources required to implement the Compact with Virginia's Veterans by creating alternate revenue sources for veterans programs.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - a. The cost of taking care of our veterans has increased significantly in the past decade. In times of austere budgets an alternate source of funding may be needed to ensure that the many important Veterans programs receive adequate funding.
 - b. Over the foreseeable future the cost of veterans programs (e.g. Virginia Wounded Warrior Program needs, cemetery maintenance, care center operations, Virginia War Memorial operations, and benefits services) will continue to increase.
 - c. The Governor and the General Assembly have and continue to identify important veterans' programs that are supported by the General Fund. However, during the austere budget challenges currently faced by the Commonwealth, additional actions may be needed to ensure adequate funding for programs and services.
 - d. These include funding for: hiring and retention of DVS claims agents, the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program, Virginia War Memorial operations and programs, and reducing homelessness among Virginia veterans.
 - e. Legislation enacted in 2010 established a Compact with Virginia's Veterans, with a goal of making Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation. New or expanded programs and services implemented under the Compact (e.g. homeless assistance, employment, education, etc.) require additional resources. While much progress has been made, more remains to be done.
3. **DISCUSSION:** Veterans' programs and services need a major, non-general fund "funding stream." It must be large enough to have a significant impact on needed veterans' programs that would otherwise require general fund monies or go unfunded.
 - a. Lotteries have been proven to provide a suitable and sustainable source of revenue.
 - b. Seven states have a dedicated revenue stream for veterans programs through the state lottery, while two additional states are working to create a veteran's lottery:
 - Four states have each raised between \$10 million and \$33 million for veterans and programs. These states have been successful in designing a lottery that does not detract from funds dedicated to education or other purposes.
 - Rather than cut into a share of the "pie", they have been able to "grow the pie."
 - c. The proceeds from the Virginia lottery are dedicated to education and so protected by the state constitution. However, some proceeds can go to other uses if approved by 4/5 of the members of the General Assembly.
 - d. No other group in America has been called on to bear the burdens and to make the sacrifices that our veterans have. Therefore, the benefits that Veterans have earned through sacrifice and service deserve to be adequately funded.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the General Assembly and the Governor approve the establishment of a veterans' lottery as part of the Compact with Virginia's Veterans to supplement the General Fund's support of approved veteran's requirements, with any residual lottery funding reverting back to Education.