

**SUBSTITUTE FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 5279**

A bill to amend 1967 PA 150, entitled
"Michigan military act,"
(MCL 32.501 to 32.851) by adding section 323.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 **Sec. 323. (1) The agency shall create and operate a buddy-to-**
2 **buddy program offering personal, 1-on-1 mentorship and support to**
3 **currently serving members of the military, including the Michigan**
4 **National Guard or military reserves, and veterans residing in this**
5 **state. The director of the agency shall designate an official in**
6 **the agency to oversee the implementation and operation of the**
7 **program. The program must include, but not be limited to,**
8 **connecting individuals to both of the following through volunteer**
9 **mentors:**

1 (a) Benefits and resources related to education, employment,
2 family-related issues, financial matters, and health care.

3 (b) Advocates, including, but not limited to, veteran
4 navigators, who can help with mental health and substance use
5 disorders.

6 (2) An individual who is not a veteran may serve as a mentor
7 in the program, but the agency shall make every reasonable effort
8 to recruit veterans to serve as mentors in the program.

9 (3) The agency may receive funding for the program from any
10 source.

11 (4) A writing prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or
12 retained by the agency or the office of mental health and suicide
13 prevention within the agency in the performance of an official
14 function under this section and that contains information specific
15 to an individual service member or veteran is not subject to
16 disclosure under the freedom of information act, 1976 PA 442, MCL
17 15.231 to 15.246.

18 (5) As used in this section:

19 (a) "Agency" means the Michigan veterans affairs agency.

20 (b) "Program" means the buddy-to-buddy program created in
21 subsection (1).

22 Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect
23 unless all of the following bills of the 102nd Legislature are
24 enacted into law:

25 (a) House Bill No. 5276.

26 (b) House Bill No. 5277.

27 (c) House Bill No. 5280.

28 (d) Senate Bill No. ____ or House Bill No. 5720 (request no.
29 05797'24).