

# HOUSE BILL NO. 5278

October 26, 2023, Introduced by Reps. Bezotte, Miller, Mentzer, Martus, MacDonell, Price, Glanville, DeBoer, Wozniak, Hill, Koleszar, Schmaltz, Edwards, Coffia, Tsernoglou, Arbit, Brenda Carter, Rogers and Bruck and referred to the Committee on Military, Veterans and Homeland Security.

A bill to amend 1953 PA 192, entitled

"An act to create a county department of veterans' affairs in certain counties, and to prescribe its powers and duties; to create the county veteran service fund and to provide for contributions to and expenditures from that fund; and to transfer the powers and duties of the soldiers' relief commission in those counties,"

(MCL 35.621 to 35.624) by amending the title, as amended by 2018 PA 210, and by adding section 3b.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:**

1

TITLE

2

An act to create a county department of veterans' affairs in

1 certain counties, and to prescribe its powers and duties; to create  
2 the county veteran service fund and to provide for contributions to  
3 and expenditures from that fund; ~~and~~ to transfer the powers and  
4 duties of the soldiers' relief commission in those counties; to  
5 create a county veteran service officer training program; and to  
6 provide for the powers and duties of certain state governmental  
7 officers and entities.

8       Sec. 3b. (1) The agency shall work with the department to  
9 establish a county veteran service officer training program to  
10 train county veteran service officers to provide mental health and  
11 substance abuse screenings to veterans. The agency may work with  
12 any other state department, nonprofit organization, and stakeholder  
13 the agency considers necessary to design and implement the training  
14 program.

15       (2) The director of the office of mental health and suicide  
16 prevention within the agency shall oversee and supervise the  
17 training program. The agency shall offer the training program to  
18 any county veteran service officer.

19       (3) The agency shall offer retraining either yearly or every  
20 other year as determined by the agency for individuals who complete  
21 the training program.

22       (4) The mental health and substance abuse screening described  
23 in subsection (1) must be based on the Columbia-Suicide Severity  
24 Rating Scale or Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview and  
25 do all of the following:

26       (a) Provide for rapid referral and follow-up, if required, by  
27 a trained behavioral health professional.

28       (b) Identify additional social needs indicators.

29       (c) Provide to the veteran who receives the mental health and

1 substance abuse screening information on additional indicators and  
2 contact information for reaching out for assistance after the  
3 mental health and substance abuse screening has been conducted.

4 (d) Provide a written screening report.

5 (e) Include a disclaimer that the mental health and substance  
6 abuse screening is intended to be purely informational and is not  
7 considered a replacement for a full evaluation by a licensed health  
8 care professional.

9 (5) The agency must provide a veteran who undergoes a mental  
10 health and substance abuse screening described in this section a  
11 copy of the screening report, on request, and retain the screening  
12 report for 2 years. A copy of the screening report of a veteran may  
13 be provided to a medical or behavioral health professional outside  
14 the mental health and substance abuse screening process only on the  
15 written release of that veteran.

16 (6) The agency shall implement a data collection policy that  
17 informs the agency where and how often the mental health and  
18 substance abuse screenings are conducted and how often the mental  
19 health and substance abuse screenings lead to additional referrals.  
20 The data collected must not contain any personal health identifying  
21 information.

22 (7) A screening report prepared under this section is not  
23 subject to disclosure under the freedom of information act, 1976 PA  
24 442, MCL 15.231 to 15.246.

25 (8) As used in this section:

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

27 (b) "Department" means the department of military and veterans  
28 affairs.

29 (c) "Training program" means the county veteran service

**1 officer training program created under subsection (1).**

**2** Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect  
**3** unless all of the following bills of the 102nd Legislature are  
**4** enacted into law:

**5** (a) Senate Bill No. \_\_\_\_ or House Bill No. 5276 (request no.  
**6** 03396'23).

**7** (b) Senate Bill No. \_\_\_\_ or House Bill No. 5280 (request no.  
**8** 04209'23).

**9** (c) Senate Bill No. \_\_\_\_ or House Bill No. 5277 (request no.  
**10** 04674'23).

**11** (d) Senate Bill No. \_\_\_\_ or House Bill No. 5279 (request no.  
**12** 04675'23).