

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

ENROLLED

Committee Substitute

for

House Bill 4693

BY DELEGATES PACK, STEELE, COOPER, PAYNTER,

SUMMERS AND J. JEFFRIES

[Passed March 7, 2020; in effect ninety days from passage.]

FILED

2020 MAR 25 P 11:39

OFFICE WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE

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1 AN ACT to amend and reenact §19-1-12 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
2 to renaming the Veteran and Warriors to Agriculture Program to the Veterans and Heroes
3 to Agriculture Program; renaming Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture fund; eliminating
4 outdated language; and authorizing the Commissioner of Agriculture to expand the scope
5 of the program to additional classes of persons.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

§19-1-12. Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program and fund.

1 (a) *Legislative findings.* —

2 West Virginians have a longstanding tradition of service in the armed forces of the United
3 States. Many veterans suffer from physical and emotional afflictions and are often unable to find
4 gainful employment upon returning from combat. Exploring opportunities to engage West
5 Virginia's veterans in agriculture is beneficial to the health and welfare of veterans, as well as to
6 the future of West Virginia's agricultural economy.

7 (b) *Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program.* —

8 The Department of Agriculture shall develop a Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture
9 Program to integrate veterans into the field of agriculture, and support veterans currently working
10 in agriculture. These programs may include, but are not limited to, using post-mine land for
11 agricultural development, promoting high tunnel crops and production, expanding the apiary
12 industry, developing cottage industries, exploring niche crops, raising more livestock, increasing
13 the aquaculture industry and helping veterans promote their agricultural products through farmers
14 markets and cooperatives. The department may call on the Department of Veterans' Assistance
15 and the state's Adjutant General for assistance to recruit and train eligible veterans, and develop
16 and support the program.

17 (c) *Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Fund.* —The Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture
18 Fund is continued, but is renamed the Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Fund. The fund shall

19 consist of income from leasing the department's property for the program, surplus funds which
20 may be transferred from the fund created by §19-12A-6a, gifts, grants and donations, and
21 legislative appropriations which may be made to support the program. Expenditures from the fund
22 shall be used exclusively, in accordance with appropriations by the Legislature, to pay costs, fees
23 and expenses necessary to administer the Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program.

24 (d) Notwithstanding any provision in this code to the contrary, should the Department of
25 Agriculture deem it necessary to provide land for activities within this program, it is exempt from
26 the purchasing requirements as they relate to the competitive leasing of state property.

27 (e) The commissioner may propose emergency or legislative rules for approval in
28 accordance with the provisions of §29A-3-1 *et seq.* to effectuate the provisions of this section.

29 (f) *Expansion of Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program.* — The Legislature finds
30 that West Virginians also proudly answers the call to serve domestically in emergency response
31 and law enforcement roles, including as police officers, sheriffs, firefighters, emergency medical
32 technicians, and first responders. The Legislature further finds that farming, including growing
33 corn, is a process that involves more than digging a hole, putting a seed in with dirt on top, and
34 adding water. To that end, the commissioner is hereby authorized to expand the scope of the
35 Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program to provide agriculture assistance and training to
36 additional West Virginia heroes that will allow these brave individuals to continue to answer the
37 call of duty by producing and providing fresh, healthy, and local food to their fellow West
38 Virginians.

The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Noor Lopez
.....
Chairman, House Committee

Murt Maynard
.....
Chairman, Senate Committee

Originating in the House.

In effect ninety days from passage.

Steve Harris
.....
Clerk of the House of Delegates

Jee Kim
.....
Clerk of the Senate

Log Hanshaw
.....
Speaker of the House of Delegates

Witt B. Cunningham
.....
President of the Senate

FILED
2020 MAR 25 PM 4:39
OFFICE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF STATE

The within *is* *approved* this the *25th*
day of *March* 2020.

James I. Goodson
.....
Governor

PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR

MAR 19 2020

Time 11:27am