

WEEK IN REVIEW

February 4, 2010

Senator Brad Zaun

Iowa's Support for Veterans and Military Personnel

I have been contacted by a few that my articles have had a negative tone. Therefore, this week I wanted to discuss what positive changes have been made for veterans that we, in the legislature, have passed in a bi-partisan way.

Over the course of the last three years, Iowa has expanded services for veterans and military personnel. A large number of Iowans have served in the military throughout the state's history. During the modern period Iowa continues to provide substantial numbers of active duty personnel and many of the National Guard and Reserve units serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Below is a list of some of the law changes, programs, updates to programs, and recognition that Iowa has provided over the last three years. These are broken down by category, and each entry represents a separate bill passed and signed by the Governor:

Assistance and Services:

- Veteran Preference in Hiring – Any veteran who served in an Iowa unit is eligible for veteran preference in hiring.
- Tax Grace Period for Active Duty Military Iowans – Tax filing grace period of 180 days for active duty military Iowans.
- Veteran Drug Coverage Clarification – Veteran residing in a health care facility is to have full use of VA prescription drug benefit plan regardless of the facility's own policy on drug distribution.
- Definition of Resident for Purposes of Tuition – Those serving on the Rock Island Arsenal are eligible for in-state tuition at Iowa Regents institutions and community colleges.
- Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children – Iowa has joined a compact between states to smooth transition for the children of military families in moving schools.
- Definition of a Veteran – Defines “veteran” to include anyone serving in the armed forces, on active duty for the purposes of receiving benefits from the state.
- Repossession and Foreclosure Protection for Military – Extends mortgage repossession and foreclosure protection to members of the National Guard and Reserves while they are deployed on active duty (already provided to active duty personnel under federal law).
- Veterans Trust Fund Uses Expanded – To include travel for spouses accompanying injured vets, in-home care, nursing home care, and other uses.
- Educational Assistance for Children of Veterans Killed in the Line of Duty – For children under age 31 who lost a parent on or after 9/11.
- Home Ownership Assistance Program for Military Members – Places the program under IFA for smoother processing.

- Leaves of Absence for Military Service – Provides protection for employers on a leave of absence for purposes of military service.
- Vietnam Conflict Bonus – Expands period of service for eligibility for the Vietnam Conflict Bonus.
- Veterans Lottery Game – Creates a Veterans Lottery game with proceeds going to the Veterans Trust Fund.
- Home Ownership Assistance Program – Makes the program permanent.
- Eligibility for Injured Veterans Grant Program – Clarifies and expands the list of veterans who are eligible for the Program.

Recognition:

- Capitol Flags Presented to Family – National and Iowa flags flown over the Capitol, at half-staff, when an Iowan is killed in duty, are to be presented to the family.
- Veterans Commemorative Property – The Department of Veterans Affairs is to regulate all trade, sale, or transfer of property commemorating a veteran or group.
- Military License Plates – Expands the number of available plates, with proceeds going to the Emergency Medical Services Fund and the Veterans License Fee Fund.

I just can't thank all of the brave men and women in the military enough and their families for the sacrifices and service they have provided.

I would like to ask you to keep in your thoughts and prayers Capt. Daniel Whitten, of Johnston and his family, who lost his life in Afghanistan.

I have two forums set in Urbandale, sponsored by the great Urbandale Chamber, with my friend, Rep. Scott Raecker.

Saturday, March 20th from 10:30 am -12:30 at Chamber Office (2900 Justin Drive, Suite L)
Saturday, April 17th from 10:30am -12:30 at Chamber Office (2900 Justin Drive, Suite L)

My forum for Des Moines is to be held with my friend, Rep. Janet Petersen.

Saturday, February 27th at 1:00 at Christopher's Restaurant banquet room

Please join me when you can. If you cannot attend please email me at brad.zaun@legis.state.ia.us or call 515-281-3371. I am always interested in your opinion and it is truly an honor to serve you!

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