



November 2, 2022

To All VFW Staff, Officers, Chairman,
District and Post Officers and Members

SUBJECT: Veterans Assistance Commissions

Over the last few weeks, we have been communicating to everyone the need for Posts and Districts to ensure they have Delegates and Alternates appointed to their County Veterans Assistance Commissions (VACs) and we encouraged those delegates and alternates to attend meetings and vote in the best interest of veterans in their county. Our motives have been questioned by a couple of the VACs.

I am publishing this letter in order to clearly define the position of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Illinois and to outline our position in supporting the VACs.

1. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Illinois fully supported HB5184 throughout the legislative process and considered it one of our legislative priorities. This bill amended the Military Veterans Assistance Act and provided much needed funding to the County VACs from the funds collected by each County. This bill became Public Law 102-0732 when the Governor signed the bill in May 2022. This was a legislative victory that ensured funding for much needed veterans assistance programs in each county.
2. This law specifically defines the roles that delegates and alternates from every Veterans Service Organization plays in the operations of each Veterans Assistance Commission in each county.
3. Unfortunately, there are only 46 counties out of the 102 counties in Illinois that have an active VAC. The IL VFW believes there should be a VAC in every county and we support any efforts to create a VAC in a county that is not currently served by a VAC.
4. The strength of the VAC and its ability to serve veterans is dependent upon every Veterans Service Organization appointing delegates and alternates to serve on the VAC. It is important that the delegates and alternates are persons that are able and willing to attend and take part in the discussions at the VAC meetings whenever they are held. As such, we will continue to encourage all of our Posts and Districts to appoint a delegate and alternate to their County VAC and ensure those delegates and alternates attend the meetings.
5. The delegates and alternates, by attending the meetings, will gain a better understanding of how the VAC in their County supports veterans and they can make decisions of the best way to support veterans. By taking part in discussions and voting, they can ensure their voices are heard and serve as the conduit for the delegates and alternates to open communications with the VAC on needs of veterans in the community. This grassroots effort will serve to ensure that the VAC in each county is equipped and ready to serve the veterans in their county. VFW IL will not interfere or interject in the daily operations of the County VACs. It is important the delegates and alternates are involved in the operations.
6. VFW IL will not support or endorse anyone, including our own VFW members, for election or appointment to any office in a County VAC. Again, one of the job duties and purpose of the delegates and alternates is to conduct the business of the County VAC and we hope they select people for positions based on their abilities and experience and their belief that they are the best person for the position.



7. VFW IL will not interfere, endorse, or support any person or group for internal conflicts or lawsuits within a VAC. Our members are directed to comply with any investigation or inquiries as required by law and within the constraints of the VFW National By-Laws and Manual of Procedures. Our members will not represent that they are speaking on behalf of the IL VFW and any views that conflict with the above statements should not be presented in a manner that would indicate that they represent the IL VFW.
8. We encourage our Posts and Districts to be involved in the operations of the VAC in their County by appointing delegates and alternates and participating in meetings. Members are NOT to get involved in the operations of VAC in any other County by interjecting or interfering with their ability to conduct business. Our involvement in any County VAC is to encourage Commanders to appoint delegates and alternates and ensure they attend meetings and vote in the best interest of veterans.

The Veterans Assistance Commission in each County is a vital resource for veterans in need and we need to fully support their efforts to perform that mission. Posts may be called upon to provide some assistance when the resources at the County VAC have been exhausted or when the needs of the veterans exceeds the ability of the VAC to meet those needs and we encourage our Posts to provide support if they have the ability to do so. We need to fully support the County VACs. We need to have delegates and alternates that represent the VFW present in their meetings to ensure the VFW is heard and we have a better understanding of how the VAC supports veterans. Our participation is critical in order to ensure the County VACs are operated efficiently and professionally and the maximum amount of funds is available to support veterans in need.

There are efforts to possibly amend the Military Veterans Assistance Act again to diminish the gains we made in passing Public Law 102-0732. VFW IL will continue to monitor and track any attempts to amend the act which would reduce the ability of the VAC to serve veterans in need. Again, we see the Veterans Assistance Commission as a vital resource for veterans in need and will continue to fight for their operations. We will continue to push for VACs to be created in Counties that don't currently have a VAC because it is such a vital resource.

Finally, and you heard it many times throughout, Post and Districts MUST appoint a delegate and alternate to their County VAC. It is important that the delegate and alternate have the ability and desire to attend the meetings of the VACs and to vote in the best interest of the veterans in their County.

Headquarters, IL VFW is here to support our Posts and Districts.

If you have any questions or concerns on the IL VFW and our position, role, motive, or beliefs as far as our support for the VACs, please call State Adjutant/Quartermaster at 217-529-6688 or email vfwil@vfwil.org

Yours in Comradeship

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bobby Edwards".

Bobby Edwards
State Commander

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