

SESSION OF 2026

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2732

As Recommended by House Committee on
Veterans and Military

Brief*

HB 2732 would create law requiring the State Registrar of Vital Statistics (Registrar) to create and maintain a roster of veterans with a service-connected disability who reside in Kansas as a part of the statewide system of vital statistics and would direct cause of death certifiers (certifiers) to determine whether the cause of death was related to any service-connected disability.

Roster

The roster created by the bill would be used to assist certifiers, as defined by the bill, to prepare death certificates. The roster would be confidential, privileged, and not subject to disclosure under the Kansas Open Records Act until July 1, 2031, unless the Legislature reviews and reenacts this confidentiality provision prior to that date.

Reference to the roster would be made available to a service-connected veteran or a next of kin of a veteran with a service-connected disability to confirm the listing of such veteran. If a veteran who is eligible is absent from the roster, the Registrar would be required to add such veteran to the roster.

The Legislative Division of Post Audit, at the direction of the Legislative Post Audit Committee, would be granted access to the roster to support data acquisition and validation

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

methods for authorized oversight audits. The bill would prohibit any audit work product, verbal testimony, or final audit report from disclosing personally identifying information of a veteran.

Cause of Death Certifier Responsibilities

The certifier would be required to confirm the service-connected status of a decedent by consulting the roster established by the bill. If such decedent was a service-connected veteran, then the certifier would be required to confirm if the primary cause of death, or contributing cause of death, is related to any morbidity or comorbidity stemming from the decedent's service-connected disability.

The certifier would be required to use a preponderance of the evidence to determine that a primary or contributory cause of death is related to the decedent's service-connected morbidities or comorbidities documented in such decedent's disability claim decision letter.

In addition to medical records and law enforcement incident reports that refer to the final circumstances of the decedent, the bill would authorize certifiers to consult:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical treatment records, benefits summary statement, or claims decision letter;
- The Uniformed Service Physical Evaluation Board decision document provided pursuant to federal law;
- A Purple Heart decoration narrative citation, a military posthumous award narrative citation, military orders, or official casualty notification correspondence from the U.S. Department of Defense.

If the certifier determines that the cause of death is related to the veteran's service-connected disability determination, the bill would require the certifier to state such determination on the decedent's death certificate.

If a veteran with a service-connected disability who resides in Kansas dies while temporarily in another jurisdiction, a Kansas certifier in the decedent's county of residence would be required to prepare a supplemental death certificate stating any connections between the decedent's cause of death and their service-connected disability.

A Kansas certifier would be required to consider whether the cause of death was related to any presumptive illness claim to a service-connected condition and list such condition on the decedent's death certificate in the following circumstances:

- If a veteran dies before the VA completes an evaluation of a decedent's claim; or
- If a veteran never filed a disability claim but served in a geographical region and epoch identified with presumptive illnesses published in the *Federal Register*.

List of Presumptive Illnesses

The bill would require the Kansas Office of Veterans Services to establish, and update as necessary, a list of all presumptive illnesses approved by the VA and published in the *Federal Register*. The bill would require such list to include any duty-related date of service epoch or geographical limits related to the published presumption.

Copies of Death Certificates

The bill would require two certified copies of the death certificate prepared pursuant to the bill be provided to the

next of kin of the veteran with a service-connected disability without charge. Additional copies of the death certificate would be subject to fees set by the Secretary for Health and Environment.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Veterans and Military at the request of a representative of the Military Officers of America, on behalf of Representative Johnson.

House Committee on Veterans and Military

In the House Committee hearing, a representative of the Military Officers Association of America testified as a **proponent** of the bill, stating the process created by the bill would raise awareness of the substantial benefits granted to survivors of deceased service-connected veterans with cause of death certifiers, resulting in more approved survivor benefits claims.

No other testimony was provided.

Fiscal Information

According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), enactment of the bill would increase expenditures by \$978,822 in FY 2027 and \$175,660 in future years. The agency states that the Office of Vital Statistics would need to create a confidential and privileged system that contains a roster of veterans with service-connected disabilities or presumptive illnesses. This system would be required to be available to service-connected veterans or next of kin of a veteran to confirm their listing on the roster. It would also be required to be accessible to medical certifiers completing death records. KDHE notes that protections would need to be in place to ensure the confidentiality of these

records, as users should see information only for a specific veteran. Creating a supplemental death document and corresponding point-of-sale changes would also need to be incorporated.

The agency estimates that the new system would cost \$900,000, with a \$100,000 annual maintenance fee. In addition, the agency estimates that staff time to build and test the system is estimated at 80 hours with an employee wage of \$39.53 per hour, totaling \$3,162. KDHE anticipates that the training of medical certifiers and ongoing support of this process would require an additional position with salary and benefits estimated at \$71,660 annually. The agency also estimates approximately 200 additional free certificates would be provided annually, with a cost of \$20 per certificate, resulting in an annual total of \$4,000.

The Kansas Office of Veterans Services reports that enactment of the bill would not result in a fiscal effect on agency operations.

Any fiscal effect associated with enactment of the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2027 Governor's Budget Report*.

Veterans and military; death certificates; Office of Vital Statistics; service-connected disability