

SESSION OF 2024

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2623**

As Recommended by House Committee on  
Veterans and Military

**Brief\***

HB 2623 would update the Veterans Claims Assistance Program (VCAP) to include references to the federal Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and cross-accreditation requirements.

***Veterans Claims Assistance Program***

The VCAP requires the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office (KCVAO) to administer annual service grants to eligible veterans service organizations (VSOs). The service grants are used to train veterans who wish to become accredited veterans claims assistance representatives (VCARs). Accredited VCARs are statutorily able to assist other veterans and their dependents in filing claims with the federal government for earned benefits. Under current law, a VSO is eligible to participate in the annual service grant with KCVAO if, among other provisions, the VSO has a presence at the federal Veterans Administration regional office and each Veterans Administration medical center in Kansas.

***HB 2623 VCAP Eligibility and Requirements***

The bill would replace references to the obsolete federal Veterans Administration with references to the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This means that in order to be eligible to participate in the annual service grant, VSOs

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\*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 <http://www.kslegislature.org>

would be required to have a presence at the federal VA regional office or medical center in Wichita, as well as each VA medical center operating in Topeka and Leavenworth.

Moreover, the bill would also specify that VCAR training be conducted by qualified trainers, rather than qualified veterans claims assistance representatives. An individual who wishes to be an accredited VCAR would be required to provide proof to KCVAO that such an individual successfully completed the VA Office Training, Responsibility, Involvement, and Preparation of Claims course.

Finally, the bill would make technical amendments to ensure consistency in statutory phrasing and to remove outdated language.

## **Background**

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Veterans and Military at the request of a representative of the KCVAO on behalf of the KCVAO.

### ***House Committee on Veterans and Military***

In the House Committee hearing on February 8, 2024, Representative Ruiz and representatives from the KCVAO and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) provided **proponent** testimony. The proponents generally noted that the bill would allow the KCVAO to partner with numerous other organizations recognized and approved by the VA to provide veteran service representative training. In addition, the representative from the MOAA testified that the bill would lead to an increase in the number of submitted claims, which, in turn, could lead to an increase in the amount of federal benefits paid to veterans in Kansas.

## **Fiscal Information**

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, the KCVAO states that enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect on the agency.

Veterans and military; Veterans Claims Assistance Program; VCAP; Veterans Affairs medical centers