

## CHAPTER 385

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**MILITARY AND VETERANS**

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**HOUSE BILL 09-1291**

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Nikkel, Casso, Court, Gardner C., Hullinghorst, Kerr J., Labuda, Lambert, Massey, Miklosi, Murray, Stephens, Todd, Apuan, Baumgardner, Fischer, Frangas, Gardner B., Gerou, Kefalas, Looper, Marostica, May, McNulty, Middleton, Roberts, Ryden, Schafer S., Sonnenberg, Summers, Tipton, Vigil, Waller, Weissmann, Carroll T.; also SENATOR(S) Shaffer B., Bacon, Boyd, Cadman, Lundberg, Schultheis, Williams, Gibbs, Heath, Hodge, Newell, Schwartz, Tapia.

**AN ACT****CONCERNING PROVIDING INFORMATION REGARDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.**

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

**SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly hereby finds that:

(a) Veterans of the United States armed forces, including the Colorado National Guard, and their families often encounter medical, financial, educational, and other challenges arising specifically as a result of their ongoing or former service in the armed forces;

(b) There are several governmental agencies, congressionally chartered veterans organizations, and nonprofit organizations available to assist veterans and their families in meeting and overcoming these challenges. Too often, however, veterans and their families do not know of the services or organizations that are available to them.

(c) In seeking assistance from organizations, veterans and their families may lack the informational resources to determine whether an organization is a legitimate, legally operated organization or an organization that is merely seeking to take advantage of the veteran or his or her family.

(2) The general assembly concludes, therefore, that it is in the best interests of the state to provide a veterans resource information clearinghouse through the division

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*Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.*

of veterans affairs in the department of military and veterans affairs to assist veterans and their families in identifying and seeking assistance from governmental agencies and private organizations.

**SECTION 2.** Part 7 of article 5 of title 28, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

**28-5-711. Veterans resource information clearinghouse.** (1) THERE IS HEREBY CREATED IN THE DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS THE VETERANS RESOURCE INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION CONCERNING SUPPORT, SERVICES, AND OTHER ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS, CONGRESSIONALLY CHARTERED VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS, AND NONPROFIT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS. TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THE DIVISION SHALL MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE THROUGH THE VETERANS RESOURCE INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE IN A VARIETY OF FORMATS TO HELP ENSURE A HIGH DEGREE OF PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY.

(2) THE DIVISION SHALL IDENTIFY THE AGENCIES, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND ORGANIZATIONS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE VETERANS RESOURCE INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE. THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS SHALL ADOPT POLICIES TO ESTABLISH CRITERIA THAT THE DIVISION SHALL APPLY TO ENSURE THAT THE NONPROFIT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED IN THE CLEARINGHOUSE ARE LEGITIMATE, LEGALLY OPERATED ORGANIZATIONS.

(3) THE DIVISION SHALL OPERATE THE VETERANS RESOURCE INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES THAT ARE APPROPRIATED OR OTHERWISE AVAILABLE TO THE DIVISION. IN ADDITION, THE DIVISION MAY SOLICIT, ACCEPT, AND EXPEND PUBLIC OR PRIVATE GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE VETERANS RESOURCE INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO DONATIONS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES AND IN-KIND DONATIONS.

**SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act shall take effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly that is allowed for submitting a referendum petition pursuant to article V, section 1 (3) of the state constitution, (August 5, 2009, if adjournment sine die is on May 6, 2009); except that, if a referendum petition is filed against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part, if approved by the people, shall take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by proclamation of the governor.

Approved: June 2, 2009