

Legislative Analysis



VIETNAM VETERAN RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE

Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4065 as enacted

Public Act 181 of 2022

Sponsor: Rep. Robert J. Bezotte

House Committee: Military, Veterans and Homeland Security

Senate Committee: Families, Seniors, and Veterans [Discharged]

Complete to 2-9-23

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4065 amends the Michigan Military Act to authorize the adjutant general to award the Michigan Vietnam Veteran Recognition Certificate to an individual who meets all of the following:

- He or she is a Michigan citizen or was a Michigan citizen while serving in the *Armed Forces of the United States*.
- He or she was honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances.
- He or she served during the Vietnam War era (February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975).

Armed Forces of the United States means the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard and includes the Michigan National Guard and reserve components.

The certificate also includes the option of a special designation developed by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to recognize individuals who were exposed during their service to dioxin or phenoxy herbicides (as in Agent Orange). To receive this designation, an individual must demonstrate in a form and manner specified by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs that the individual was exposed to dioxin or phenoxy herbicides while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, as evidenced by a medical diagnosis of a disease associated with dioxin or phenoxy herbicides and any other proof required by the adjutant general.

The certificate may be presented to a designated representative of a deceased recipient.

An individual cannot be awarded more than one certificate.

The adjutant general, in conjunction with the director of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, must develop and publish rules to carry out the bill's provisions.

MCL 32.582

BRIEF DISCUSSION:

House committee testimony discussed the importance to Michigan of all veterans and of giving recognition to veterans. However, as the bill sponsor indicated, Michigan currently does not have a certificate program to recognize Vietnam veterans. Some questions were raised as to how Michigan veterans would be made aware of the certificate program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill could result in minimal costs to the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and would have no impact on local units of government. Minimal administrative MVAA staff time costs would come from developing and publishing rules for granting the Vietnam Veteran Recognition Certificate. The bill is permissive and does not require certificates to be awarded. Costs to the MVAA would be able to be absorbed through ongoing appropriations.

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