

# Gov. Pritzker Signs Slate Of Bills Expanding Supports For Active Military Members, Veterans, And Military Families

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**CHICAGO** — Governor Pritzker today signed five bills expanding protections for veterans, active-duty soldiers, and military dependents.

“The men and women of this state and this country who heed the call to serve deserve every possible support and protection during and after their time in the military,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “These bills weave together a more comprehensive safety net to protect and uplift veterans and service members dealing with the complexities of life in the military, including the many ways in which service can impact someone’s family and loved ones. To the service members recognized by our newly designed Honor and Remember flag, we thank you for your ultimate sacrifice and mourn with your families and the rest of the state.”

**HB0925:** House Bill 0925 creates the “Veteran Service Organization State Charter Act.” This act lays out specific requirements organizations must meet in order to be considered state-chartered veterans service organizations. This is a voluntary process that includes demonstrating that an organization must be formed by and for veterans with a majority of board members who are veterans, alongside other financial and legal qualifications.

**HB3103:** House Bill 3103 eases the process of obtaining a civil no contact order of protection for victims and survivors of military sexual assault. In 2022, Governor Pritzker signed into law SB257, ensuring military sexual assault victims were able to access the same rights and protections as their civilian counterparts. SB 257 allowed Military Protective Orders to be used as a basis for the issuing of criminal domestic violence orders of protection, stalking no contact orders, and gave local law enforcement the ability to enforce a military protective order. This act expands on those efforts to ensure victims and survivors of military sexual assault have access to all necessary resources for protection. The U.S. Department of Defense has cited Illinois’ work in this area as a model for national reform.

**HB3295:** House Bill 3295 requires the military liaison for the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) to notify service members’ spouses of federal assistance programs to reimburse licensing fees when they apply to transfer a professional license to Illinois. Under federal law, military spouses may be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for obtaining a professional license required when moving to a new state for military relocation. This includes exam and registration fees. Governor Pritzker has previously prioritized aiding military spouses with relocation by creating a liaison to assist eligible members and their spouses, and by expediting certain applications for review. The licensing reimbursement will be paid by the branch of the military the individual serves in.

**HB2856:** House Bill 2856 amends the Vital Records Act by adding that the death certificate for an individual who has history of military service may include or be amended to include whether or not a military service-related injury contributed to the

cause of death. Having such a classification can expand and expedite access to benefits for the spouse or dependents of the deceased.

**SB1072:** Senate Bill 1072 designated the Honor and Remember flag as the specific symbol to acknowledge American service men and women who lost their lives in the line of duty. The flag was created by the father of Cpl. George ‘Tony’ Lutz II who was killed in action while on patrol in Fallujah, Iraq. The bill creates a mandate on public entities that would then be required to purchase the flag, which cost \$55 each. Twenty other states officially recognize this flag.

"I applaud the governor for signing House Bill 3103 and State Representative Stephanie Kifowit for her efforts and diligence on this legislation," **said State Senator Mike Porfirio (D-Lyons Township)**. "HB 3103 further protects military service members who are survivors of sexual misconduct. We have a moral obligation to ensure that military service members who are serving and protecting us are also protected fully under the law. I also thank Governor Pritzker and Attorney General Raoul for supporting legislation establishing state charter status for a veteran service organization in order to be eligible to serve on a county Veterans Assistance Commission. This legislation will be instrumental in establishing criteria that ensures members of a VAC are fully qualified and, most importantly, that our military veterans in the state of Illinois are receiving the very best support and assistance they have earned through their service and sacrifice."

"I am proud of Illinois being a nationwide leader in our support for Veterans. As one of the few Veterans in the Illinois House, it is my honor to advocate for my fellow Veterans. These bills continue that dedication to those who have worn the uniform and given so much for our Country," **State Representative Stephanie Kifowit (D-Aurora) said**. "Victims of Military Sexual Assault need to have all the protections we can give as a state and continue to ensure victims are protected and safe. We also strive to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice with the Honor and Remember Flag along with strengthening our Veteran network of support. I look forward to continuing to support my fellow Veterans."

"This new law will create clarity to ensure the loved ones of our fallen heroes are easily able to access the financial support that they are entitled to," **said State Senator Suzy Glowiak Hilton (D-Western Springs)**. "Our veterans have sacrificed everything to protect our great state and nation. The least we can do is make sure their families and loved ones receive the rights and financial support for the sacrifices they have made to protect our values and freedom."

"Service members and their spouses sacrifice so much in their service to our country, including facing disruptions to their work when they are relocated," **said State Senator**

**Julie Morrison (D-Lake Forest).** “Waiving fees for active-duty service members and their spouses seeking a professional or occupational license — which they will need if they are reassigned to a different state — is the least we can do to support them.”

“Military members and their families deserve our thanks for their selfless dedication to our safety, security, and protection of our freedoms” **said State Rep. Harry Benton (D-Plainfield).** “When their duties bring them to Illinois from out of state, helping them to pick up where they left off with a minimum of disruption is the least we can do. We can always take steps to better the lives of active military and veterans, and I vow to continue to do so.”

“The idea for this legislation was presented to me by the family of a deceased veteran who was denied certain death benefits just because his death certificate did not include the full range of information about the conditions which led to his death,” **said State Representative Dan Swanson (R-Hoodhull).** “We need to change the way we record this information so that this does not happen again.”

“The Honor and Remember Flag has become a powerful and moving symbol for the loved ones of servicemen and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation and its freedoms,” **said State Senator Sue Rezin (R-Morris).** “While we may never be able to truly thank these American heroes enough or fill the hole left by their loss, officially recognizing this flag and what it means is just one small gesture we can make to ensure that we remember and honor the sacrifice they made in order to preserve our way of life.”