

P.L. 2025, CHAPTER 340, *approved January 20, 2026*
Assembly, No. 1131 (*Third Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning unclaimed cremains of veterans ¹, eligible
2 spouses of veterans, and eligible dependents of veterans¹ and
3 amending P.L.1983, c.385, ²P.L.2003, c.221,² P.L.2009, c.14,
4 and ²**[N.J.S.38A:3-6]** N.J.S.38A:21-5².

5
6 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
7 *of New Jersey:*

8
9 ¹**[**1. Section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385 (C.26:7-18.2) is amended to
10 read as follows:

11 2. a. Except as provided by subsection b. of this section, a
12 person may dispose of the cremains of a dead human body which
13 have not been claimed by a relative or friend of the deceased within
14 one year from the date of cremation upon certification, to the
15 commissioner's satisfaction, that a diligent effort has been made to
16 identify, locate and notify a relative or friend of the deceased within
17 that one-year period. A diligent effort shall include a certified
18 letter, return receipt requested, mailed to the person who authorized
19 the cremation.

20 A funeral director, licensed pursuant to P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-
21 32 et seq.), who, after due diligence to find a relative or friend of
22 the deceased, is knowingly in possession of the unclaimed cremains
23 of a veteran, as defined by section 1 of P.L.1989, c.162 (C.38A:3-
24 6.3), shall notify the New Jersey Department of Military and
25 Veterans Affairs, by written or electronic communication, of the
26 location and identity of such cremains one year after the date of
27 cremation.

28 As used in this section, "cremains" means that substance which
29 remains after the cremation of a dead human body.

30 b. A funeral director**[**, licensed pursuant to P.L.1952, c.340
31 (C.45:7-32 et seq.),**]** shall grant a qualified veterans' organization
32 the right to receive the cremains of a veteran which have not been
33 claimed by a relative or friend of the deceased within one year after
34 cremation upon certification, to the commissioner's satisfaction, that
35 a diligent effort, as defined in subsection a. of this section, has been
36 made to identify, locate and notify a relative or friend of the
37 deceased within that one-year period.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AMV committee amendments adopted June 6, 2024.

²Senate SMV committee amendments adopted December 1, 2025.

³Assembly amendments adopted in accordance with Governor's
recommendations January 12, 2026.

1 A qualified veterans' organization which takes possession of
2 cremains pursuant to this section shall dispose of the cremains by
3 scattering them at sea or by interring them on land in a dignified
4 manner at the State-operated, Brigadier General William C. Doyle
5 Memorial Cemetery, if the individual is eligible for interment at
6 that facility.

7 As used in this section, "qualified veterans' organization" means
8 a veterans' organization that qualifies as a section 501(c)(3) or
9 501(c)(19) tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue
10 Code, or a federally chartered Veterans' Service Organization.

11 c. A funeral home or mortuary, or an agent of the funeral home
12 or mortuary, or a funeral director, or qualified veterans'
13 organization, shall not be liable for damages in any civil action
14 arising out of the disposal of cremains pursuant to this section
15 unless the damages are the result of gross negligence or willful
16 misconduct.

17 (cf: P.L.2009, c.14, s.1)]¹.

18
19 ¹[2. Section 2 of P.L.2009, c.14 (C.38A:3-2b4) is amended to
20 read as follows:

21 2. a. A funeral director, licensed pursuant to P.L.1952, c.340
22 (C.45:7-32 et seq.), shall grant a qualified veterans' organization, as
23 defined in subsection b. of section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385 (C.26:7-
24 18.2), the right to receive the cremains of a veteran which have not
25 been claimed by a relative or friend of the deceased within one year
26 after cremation upon certification, to the satisfaction of the
27 Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, that a diligent effort,
28 as defined in subsection a. of section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385 (C.26:7-
29 18.2), has been made to identify, locate and notify a relative or
30 friend of the deceased within that one-year period, as provided
31 under section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385 (C.26:7-18.2).

32 A funeral director, licensed pursuant to P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-
33 32 et seq.), who, after due diligence to find a relative or friend of
34 the deceased, is knowingly in possession of the unclaimed cremains
35 of a veteran, as defined by section 1 of P.L.1989, c.162 (C.38A:3-
36 6.3), shall notify the New Jersey Department of Military and
37 Veterans Affairs, by written or electronic communication, of the
38 location and identity of such cremains one year after the date of
39 cremation.

40 A qualified veterans' organization which takes possession of
41 cremains pursuant to this section shall dispose of the cremains by
42 scattering them at sea or by interring them on land in a dignified
43 manner at the State-operated, Brigadier General William C. Doyle
44 Memorial Cemetery, if the individual is eligible for interment at
45 that facility.

1 b. A funeral home or mortuary, or an agent of the funeral home
2 or mortuary, or a funeral director, or qualified veterans'
3 organization, shall not be liable for damages in any civil action
4 arising out of the disposal of cremains pursuant to this section
5 unless the damages are the result of gross negligence or willful
6 misconduct.

7 (cf: P.L.2009, c.14, s.2)]¹

8
9 ¹1. Section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385 (C.26:7-18.2) is amended to
10 read as follows:

11 2. a. Except as provided by subsection b. of this section, a person
12 may dispose of the cremains of a dead human body which have not
13 been claimed by a relative or friend of the deceased within one year
14 from the date of cremation upon certification, to the commissioner's
15 satisfaction, that a diligent effort has been made to identify, locate
16 and notify a relative or friend of the deceased within that one-year
17 period. A diligent effort shall include a certified letter, return
18 receipt requested, mailed to the person who authorized the
19 cremation.

20 ²[A funeral director, licensed pursuant to P.L.1952, c.340
21 (C.45:7-32 et seq.), who, after due diligence to find a relative or
22 friend of the deceased, is knowingly in possession of the unclaimed
23 cremains of a veteran, as defined by section 1 of P.L.1989, c.162
24 (C.38A:3-6.3) N.J.S.38A:21-3, or the cremains of an eligible
25 spouse or eligible dependent of a veteran, shall notify the New
26 Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, by written or
27 electronic communication, of the location and identity of such
28 cremains one year after the date of cremation.]]²

29 As used in this section, "cremains" means that substance which
30 remains after the cremation of a dead human body.

31 b. ²(1)² A funeral director, licensed pursuant to P.L.1952,
32 c.340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.), shall grant a qualified veterans'
33 organization the right to receive the cremains of a veteran, or the
34 cremains of an eligible spouse or eligible dependent of a veteran,
35 which have not been claimed by a relative or friend of the deceased
36 within one year after cremation upon certification, to the
37 commissioner's satisfaction, that a diligent effort, as defined in
38 subsection a. of this section, has been made to identify, locate and
39 notify a relative or friend of the deceased within that one-year
40 period.

41 A qualified veterans' organization which takes possession of
42 cremains pursuant to this section shall dispose of the cremains by
43 scattering them at sea or by interring them on land in a dignified
44 manner at the State-operated, Brigadier General William C. Doyle
45 Veterans' Memorial Cemetery, a State-operated veterans' memorial
46 cemetery, a national veterans' memorial cemetery, or a local

1 veterans' memorial cemetery, if the individual is eligible for
2 interment at those facilities.

3 As used in this section, "qualified veterans' organization" means
4 a veterans' organization that qualifies as a section 501(c)(3) or
5 501(c)(19) tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue
6 Code, or a federally chartered Veterans' Service Organization.

7 ²(2) Each funeral director shall promptly respond to a request
8 from the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs³],
9 made pursuant to subsection (s) of N.J.S.38A:21-5,]³ for
10 information as to whether the cremains of a veteran, or the cremains
11 of an eligible spouse or eligible dependent of a veteran, have been
12 claimed.²

13 c. A funeral home or mortuary, or an agent of the funeral home
14 or mortuary, or a funeral director, or qualified veterans'
15 organization, shall not be liable for damages in any civil action
16 arising out of the disposal of cremains pursuant to this section
17 unless the damages are the result of gross negligence or willful
18 misconduct.¹

19 (cf: P.L.2021, c.37, s.1)

20
21 ²2. Section 16 of P.L.2003, c.221 (C.26:8-24.1) is amended to
22 read as follows:

23 16. a. The State registrar shall establish and maintain the New
24 Jersey Electronic Death Registration System or NJ-EDRS.

25 (1) The system shall be fully implemented no later than 18
26 months after the date of enactment of P.L.2003, c.221, and shall be
27 the required means of death registration and certification for any
28 death or fetal death occurring in this State, subject to any exception
29 that may be approved by the State registrar in the case of a specific
30 death or fetal death. All participants in the death registration
31 process, including, but not limited to, the State registrar, local
32 registrars, deputy registrars, alternate deputy registrars,
33 subregistrars, the Chief State Medical Examiner, Deputy Chief State
34 Medical Examiner, county or intercounty medical examiners,
35 assistant county or intercounty medical examiners, funeral
36 directors, attending physicians and resident physicians, licensed
37 health care facilities, and other public or private institutions
38 providing medical care, treatment or confinement to persons, shall
39 be required to utilize the NJ-EDRS to provide the information that
40 is required of them by statute or regulation.

41 (2) The State registrar may provide for a phased implementation
42 of the system, beginning seven months after the date of enactment
43 of P.L.2003, c.221, by requiring certain users, who are designated
44 by the State registrar on a geographic or other basis for this
45 purpose, to commence utilization of the system.

46 (3) Beginning no later than six months after the date of
47 enactment of P.L.2003, c.221, the State registrar shall authorize and

1 provide material support, in the form of system access, curriculum
2 guidelines and user registration capability and authority, to the
3 principal trade associations or professional organizations
4 representing persons affected by implementation of the NJ-EDRS,
5 for the purposes of providing training and education with regard to
6 the NJ-EDRS. The State registrar may conduct such education and
7 training, or authorize other entities to do so on his behalf; however,
8 these activities shall not be construed as restricting the training and
9 education activities of any affected trade association or professional
10 organization, including the location, manner, fees, or other means
11 of conducting those activities on the part of the association or
12 organization.

13 b. The NJ-EDRS shall, at a minimum, provide for:

14 (1) the direct transmission of burial permit documentation to the
15 originating funeral home in an electronic form capable of output to
16 a local printer;

17 (2) an overnight mail system for the delivery of NJ-EDRS-
18 generated death certificates by the State registrar and local
19 registrars, the cost of which shall be chargeable to the funeral
20 director of record;

21 (3) an automated notification system to alert other responsible
22 parties to pending cases, including notification to or from alternate
23 local registrars;

24 (4) a systematic electronic payment method by which all fees are
25 taken from accounts for which funeral homes are financially
26 responsible and distributed, as appropriate, to the State registrar or
27 local registrars as payment for the issuance of permits, the
28 recording of records, the making of certified copies of death
29 certificates, or for other charges that may be incurred;

30 (5) a legally binding system of digital authentication in lieu of
31 signatures for the responsible parties and a means of assuring
32 database security that permits users to enter the system from
33 multiple sites and includes contemporaneous and remote data
34 security methods to protect the system from catastrophic loss or
35 intrusions, as well as a method of data encryption for transmission;

36 (6) the capacity for authorized users to retrieve data comprising
37 the death certification record;

38 (7) the capacity to electronically amend and correct death
39 records;

40 (8) electronic notification, upon completion of the death record
41 and issuance of a burial permit, of the decedent's name, Social
42 Security number, and last known address and the informant to: the
43 federal Social Security Administration, the U.S. Citizenship and
44 Immigration Services, the Division of Medical Assistance and
45 Health Services in the Department of Human Services, the
46 Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and such other
47 governmental agencies as the State registrar determines will

1 substantially contribute to safeguarding public benefit programs and
 2 diminish the criminal use of a decedent's name and other identifying
 3 information; and the New Jersey State Funeral Directors
 4 Association, in the case of a decedent participating in one of its
 5 funeral expense payment programs, in such a manner as to enable it
 6 to fulfill its fiduciary obligations for the payment of the decedent's
 7 final funeral and burial expenses;

8 (9) sufficient data documentation to meet contemporary and
 9 emerging standards and expectations of vital record archiving;

10 **【and】**

11 (10) continuous 24-hour-a-day technical support for all
 12 authorized users of the system; and

13 (11) ³**【in the case of】** when information submitted to the NJ-
 14 EDRS identifies a decedent as³ a veteran, or an eligible spouse or
 15 eligible dependent of a veteran, whose remains are cremated,
 16 electronic notification to the Department of Veterans Affairs, upon
 17 completion of the death record and issuance of the cremation
 18 permit, which electronic notification shall include ³, to the extent
 19 available,³ the decedent's: name; last known address; dates of
 20 service, including active duty, reservist, and national guard dates of
 21 service, as appropriate; date of death; and date on which the
 22 cremation permit was issued.

23 c. A provider of information that is required to complete a death
 24 certificate, or who is subject to the provisions of law governing the
 25 NJ-EDRS, shall not be deemed to be acting as a local registrar,
 26 deputy registrar, alternate deputy registrar, or subregistrar solely by
 27 virtue of permitting other providers of information to gain access to
 28 the NJ-EDRS by using those other providers' identifying
 29 information.²

30 (cf: P.L.2018, c.62, s.31)

31
 32 ²**【12.】** ³ Section 2 of P.L.2009, c.14 (C.38A:3-2b4) is amended
 33 to read as follows:

34 2. a. ²(1)² A funeral director, licensed pursuant to P.L.1952,
 35 c.340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.), shall grant a qualified veterans'
 36 organization, as defined in subsection b. of section 2 of P.L.1983,
 37 c.385 (C.26:7-18.2), the right to receive the cremains of a veteran,
 38 or the cremains of an eligible spouse or eligible dependent of a
 39 veteran, which have not been claimed by a relative or friend of the
 40 deceased within one year after cremation upon certification, to the
 41 satisfaction of the Commissioner of Health, that a diligent effort, as
 42 defined in subsection a. of section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385 (C.26:7-
 43 18.2), has been made to identify, locate and notify a relative or
 44 friend of the deceased within that one-year period, as provided
 45 under section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385 (C.26:7-18.2).

46 ²**【A funeral director, licensed pursuant to P.L.1952, c.340**
 47 **(C.45:7-32 et seq.), who, after due diligence to find a relative or**

1 friend of the deceased, is knowingly in possession of the unclaimed
2 cremains of a veteran, as defined by section 1 of P.L.1989, c.162
3 (C.38A:3-6.3), or the cremains of an eligible spouse or eligible
4 dependent of a veteran, shall notify the New Jersey Department of
5 Military and Veterans Affairs, by written or electronic
6 communication, of the location and identity of such cremains one
7 year after the date of cremation.】²

8 A qualified veterans' organization which takes possession of
9 cremains pursuant to this section shall dispose of the cremains by
10 scattering them at sea or by interring them on land in a dignified
11 manner at the State-operated, Brigadier General William C. Doyle
12 Veterans' Memorial Cemetery, a State-operated veterans' memorial
13 cemetery, a national veterans' memorial cemetery, or a local
14 veterans memorial cemetery, if the individual is eligible for
15 interment at those facilities.

16 ²(2) Each funeral director shall promptly respond to a request
17 from the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs³ 【,
18 made pursuant to subsection (2) of N.J.S.38A:21-5,】³ for
19 information as to whether the cremains of a veteran, or the cremains
20 of an eligible spouse or eligible dependent of a veteran, have been
21 claimed.²

22 b. A funeral home or mortuary, or an agent of the funeral home
23 or mortuary, or a funeral director, or qualified veterans'
24 organization, shall not be liable for damages in any civil action
25 arising out of the disposal of cremains pursuant to this section
26 unless the damages are the result of gross negligence or willful
27 misconduct.¹

28 (cf: P.L.2021, c.37, s.4)

29
30 ²**【3. N.J.S.38A:3-6 is amended to read as follows:**

31 38A:3-6. Under the direction of the Governor, the Adjutant
32 General shall:

33 (a) Exercise control over the affairs of the Department of
34 Military and Veterans' Affairs and in connection therewith make
35 and issue such regulations governing the work of the Department of
36 Military and Veterans' Affairs and the conduct of its employees as
37 may, in his judgment, be necessary or desirable.

38 (b) Be the request officer of the Department of Military and
39 Veterans' Affairs within the meaning of such term as defined in
40 section 1 of P.L.1944, c.112 (C.52:27B-1).

41 (c) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1988, c.138.)

42 (d) Command the organized militia of the State, with
43 responsibility for recruiting, mobilization, administration, training,
44 discipline, equipping, supply and general efficiency thereof. He
45 may issue such regulations and delegate such command functions as
46 he shall deem necessary. The regulations so issued shall, insofar as

1 possible, conform to the federal laws and regulations concerning the
2 same.

3 (e) Maintain the archives and be the custodian of the records and
4 papers required, by laws or regulations, to be filed with the
5 Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs.

6 (f) Supervise, administer and coordinate those activities of the
7 selective service system for which the Governor is responsible.

8 (g) Acquire by gift, grant, purchase, exchange, eminent domain,
9 or in any other lawful manner, in the name of and for the use of the
10 State of New Jersey, all those parcels of land as shall be necessary
11 for armories and other militia facilities, and supervise the design,
12 construction, alteration, maintenance and repair of said property.

13 (h) Establish and maintain such headquarters as may be required
14 for the militia.

15 (i) Exercise the powers vested in him and perform such other
16 duties and functions as required of him by the Governor and by
17 federal and State laws and regulations.

18 (j) Exercise all of the functions, powers and duties heretofore
19 vested in the Director of the Division on Veterans' Programs and
20 Special Services.

21 (k) Appoint and remove officers and other personnel employed
22 within the department, subject to the provisions of N.J.S.38A:3-8
23 and Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes and other applicable
24 statutes, except as herein otherwise specifically provided.

25 (l) Have authority to organize and maintain an administrative
26 division and to assign to employment therein secretarial, clerical
27 and other assistants in the department or the Adjutant General's
28 Office for the purpose of providing centralized support to all
29 segments of the department, including budgeting, personnel
30 administration and oversight of equal opportunity programs.

31 (m) Perform, exercise and discharge the functions, powers and
32 duties of the department through such divisions as may be
33 established by this act or otherwise by law.

34 (n) Organize the work of the department in divisions not
35 inconsistent with the provisions of this act and in bureaus and other
36 organizational units as the Adjutant General may determine to be
37 necessary for efficient and effective operation.

38 (o) Adopt, issue and promulgate, in the name of the department,
39 pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
40 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), such rules and regulations as may be
41 authorized by law.

42 (p) Institute, or cause to be instituted, legal proceedings or
43 processes as necessary to properly enforce and give effect to any of
44 the Adjutant General's powers or duties.

45 (q) Make an annual report to the Governor and to the Legislature
46 of the department's operations, and render other reports as the

1 Governor shall from time to time request or as may be required by
2 law.

3 (r) Coordinate the activities of the department, and the several
4 divisions and other agencies therein, in a manner designed to
5 eliminate overlapping and duplicative functions.

6 (s) Integrate within the department, so far as practicable, all staff
7 services of the department and of several divisions and other
8 agencies therein.

9 (t) Request access to all relevant files and records of other State
10 agencies, which may be made available to the Adjutant General by
11 the head of a State agency, and request, subject to the permission of
12 the head of the State agency, any officer or employee therein to
13 provide information as necessary to assist in the performance of the
14 functions of the department.

15 (u) Supervise and operate the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial
16 Home-Menlo Park, the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Home-
17 Vineland, the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Home-Paramus and
18 the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Cemetery-Arneytown.

19 (v) Supervise and operate the liaison office and the field offices
20 which serve the federal Veterans' Affairs Medical Centers.

21 (w) Make application for federal grants and programs, other
22 than education grants or funds.

23 (x) Administer the federally-funded training and rehabilitation
24 programs, except for the administration of federally-funded
25 education and training programs set forth in 38 U.S.C. s.36 et seq.

26 (y) Provide current information to the general public on State
27 and federal veterans' programs and benefits; create a comprehensive
28 public webpage for women veterans that includes, but is not limited
29 to, the following information: veterans' legal rights, benefits,
30 medical and insurance issues, education, the transition from active
31 service to civilian life, and other resources available to veterans.

32 (z) Develop and administer the New Jersey Homeless Veterans
33 Grant Program established pursuant to section 3 of P.L.2013, c.239
34 (C.38A:3-6.2b).

35 (aa) Encourage and facilitate the registration of each service
36 member residing in New Jersey with the United States Department
37 of Veterans Affairs, or its successor agency. Registration shall take
38 place, as appropriate, when the service member returns from
39 deployment on federal active duty or is discharged or as soon as
40 possible thereafter. The term "service member" shall mean
41 members of the New Jersey National Guard and members of the
42 United States Armed Forces, or a Reserve component thereof, when
43 the information on each member is made available to the
44 department.

45 (bb) Develop and coordinate a volunteer-based program
46 comprised of former servicemembers to assist and mentor veterans
47 who become involved with the criminal justice system, while

1 criminal proceedings are pending and afterward, in accessing
 2 assistance to resolve the underlying problems that led or contributed
 3 to the veteran's involvement with the criminal justice system
 4 including, but not limited to, offering support and guidance,
 5 securing housing, employment linkages, job training, education,
 6 transportation, disability compensation claims, discharge status,
 7 health care and other linkages available at the local, State and
 8 federal level that can ease the challenge of reentry into civilian life.
 9 In addition, the Adjutant General shall develop a registry of
 10 volunteer mentors and make the registry available pursuant to
 11 P.L.2017, c.42 (C.2C:43-23 et al.).

12 (cc) Prepare and disseminate a directory of Veterans Diversion
 13 Resource Program entities currently available within New Jersey
 14 pursuant to P.L.2017, c.42 (C.2C:43-23 et al.).

15 (dd) Create a comprehensive public webpage for Gold Star
 16 family members that includes, but is not limited to, the following
 17 information: State benefits; State and county liaisons; a list of
 18 service members from New Jersey killed in action; links to other
 19 Gold Star family organizations; and such other information and
 20 resources as the Adjutant General deems necessary and beneficial to
 21 a Gold Star family member. A "Gold Star family member" means
 22 the spouse, domestic partner, partner in a civil union, parent,
 23 brother, sister, child, legal guardian, or other legal custodian,
 24 whether of the whole or half blood, or by adoption.

25 (ee) Identify each New Jersey resident who enrolls in the United
 26 States Military Academy, United States Naval Academy, United
 27 States Coast Guard Academy, United States Merchant Marine
 28 Academy, or United States Air Force Academy, and issue a New
 29 Jersey State flag to that individual.

30 (ff) Develop and maintain an Internet-based central reporting
 31 system to provide the location and identity of unclaimed cremains
 32 of veterans, ¹eligible spouses of veterans, or eligible dependents of
 33 veterans¹ as provided to the department by funeral directors ¹[.]¹
 34 licensed pursuant to P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.).
 35 (cf: P.L.2019, c.283, s.1)]²

36

37 ²4. N.J.S.38A:21-5 is amended to read as follows:

38 38A:21-5. The commissioner, as head of the department, shall
 39 have all of the functions, powers, and duties heretofore vested in the
 40 Administrator of Veterans Affairs of the Department of Military
 41 and Veterans' Affairs, previously designated in N.J.S.38A:3-2, and
 42 shall, in addition to the functions, powers, and duties vested in the
 43 commissioner by this act, N.J.S.38A:21-1 et al., or by any other
 44 law, which are as follows:

45 a. Administer the work of the department;

46 b. Appoint and remove officers and other personnel employed
 47 within the department, subject to the provisions of Title 11A of the

- 1 New Jersey Statutes and other applicable statutes, except as herein
2 otherwise specifically provided;
- 3 c. Have authority to organize and maintain an administrative
4 division and to assign to employment therein secretarial, clerical,
5 and other assistants in the department's or the commissioner's office
6 as the internal operations of the department may require, in
7 accordance with Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes;
- 8 d. Perform, exercise, and discharge the functions, powers, and
9 duties of the department through such divisions as may be
10 established by this act or otherwise by law;
- 11 e. Organize the work of the department in divisions, not
12 inconsistent with the provisions of this act, and in bureaus and other
13 organizational units as the commissioner may determine to be
14 necessary for efficient and effective operation;
- 15 f. Adopt, issue, and promulgate, in the name of the department,
16 pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
17 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), such rules and regulations as may be
18 necessary to implement this act or as may be authorized by law;
- 19 g. Formulate and adopt rules and regulations for the efficient
20 conduct of the work and general administration of the department,
21 its officers, and its employees;
- 22 h. Institute, or cause to be instituted, legal proceedings or
23 processes as may be necessary to properly enforce and give effect to
24 any of the commissioner's powers or duties;
- 25 i. Coordinate the activities of the department, and the other
26 divisions and agencies therein, in a manner designed to eliminate
27 overlapping and duplicative functions;
- 28 j. Integrate within the department, so far as practicable, all staff
29 services of the department and of the other divisions and agencies
30 therein;
- 31 k. Have access to all relevant files and records of other State
32 agencies and require any officer or employee therein to provide
33 information as necessary to assist in performing the functions of the
34 department, subject to any privacy laws;
- 35 l. Maintain suitable headquarters for the department and such
36 other quarters as the commissioner shall deem necessary to the
37 proper functioning of the department;
- 38 m. Encourage and facilitate the registration of each service
39 member residing in New Jersey with the United States Department
40 of Veterans Affairs or its successor agency. Registration shall take
41 place, as appropriate, when the service member returns from
42 deployment on federal active duty, or is discharged, or as soon as
43 possible thereafter. The term "service member" shall mean
44 members of the New Jersey National Guard and members of the
45 United States Armed Forces, or a Reserve component thereof, when
46 the information on each member is made available to the
47 department;

1 n. Develop and coordinate a volunteer-based program comprised
2 of former service members to assist and mentor veterans who
3 become involved with the criminal justice system, while criminal
4 proceedings are pending and afterward, with accessing assistance to
5 resolve the underlying problems that led or contributed to the
6 veteran's involvement with the criminal justice system including,
7 but not limited to, offering support and guidance, securing housing,
8 employment linkages, job training, education, transportation,
9 disability compensation claims, discharge status, health care, and
10 other linkages available at the local, State, and federal level that can
11 ease the challenge of reentry into civilian life. In addition, the
12 commissioner shall develop a registry of volunteer mentors and
13 make the registry available pursuant to P.L.2017, c.42 (C.2C:43-23
14 et al.);

15 o. Prepare and disseminate a directory of Veterans Diversion
16 Resource Program entities currently available within New Jersey
17 pursuant to P.L.2017, c.42 (C.2C:43-23 et al.);

18 p. Create a comprehensive public webpage for Gold Star family
19 members that includes, but is not limited to, the following
20 information: State benefits, State and county liaisons, a list of
21 service members from New Jersey killed in action, links to other
22 Gold Star family organizations, and such other information and
23 resources as the commissioner deems necessary and beneficial to a
24 Gold Star family member. A "Gold Star family member" means the
25 spouse, domestic partner, partner in a civil union, parent, brother,
26 sister, child, legal guardian, or other legal custodian, whether of the
27 whole or half blood, or by adoption, of a member of the Armed
28 Forces of the United States or the National Guard who died while
29 on active duty for the United States;

30 q. Maintain a regional network of Veteran Service Offices to
31 assist veterans and their dependents with information and guidance
32 in filing claims and to assist with employment, education, burial,
33 counseling, housing, social and medical services, and other areas of
34 concern to veterans and their families, as well as provide advice and
35 support to veterans re-entering civilian life; **and**

36 r. Perform such other functions as may be prescribed in this act
37 or by any other law ; and

38 s. Use the electronic notification provided pursuant to paragraph
39 (11) of subsection b. of section 16 of P.L.2003, c.221 (C.26:8-24.1)
40 to³ identify funeral homes at which the remains of a veteran, or the
41 remains of an eligible spouse or eligible dependent of a veteran,
42 were cremated and, on the first day of the thirteenth month after the
43 date the cremation permit was issued, transmit information to a
44 qualified veterans' organization, as defined in subsection b. of
45 section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385 (C.26:7-18.2), who may in turn³
46 contact the funeral home to request information as to whether those
47 cremains have been claimed. In the event a funeral home advises

1 that the cremains of a veteran, or the cremains of an eligible spouse
 2 or eligible dependent of a veteran, have not been claimed, the
 3 ³Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs may assist
 4 the]³ funeral home ³in contacting a qualified veterans'
 5 organization, as defined in subsection b. of section 2 of P.L.1983,
 6 c.385 (C.26:7-18.2), to coordinate the] may³ release ³[of]³ the
 7 remains to the qualified veterans' organization consistent with the
 8 requirements of subsection b. of section 2 of P.L.1983, c.385
 9 (C.26:7-18.2) and section 2 of P.L.2009, c.14 (C.38A:3-2b4).²
 10 (cf: N.J.S.38A:21-5)

11
 12 ³²5. (New section) In the event that the New Jersey Electronic
 13 Death Registration System (NJ-EDRS) has not been adapted to
 14 provide the electronic notifications required under paragraph (11) of
 15 subsection b. of section 16 of P.L.2003, c.221 (C.26:8-24.1) on the
 16 first day of the seventh month next following the effective date of
 17 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the
 18 Commissioner of Health shall appear before the Assembly Military
 19 and Veterans Affairs Committee, the Senate Military and Veterans
 20 Affairs Committee, the Assembly Oversight, Reform, and Federal
 21 Relations Committee, or the Senate Legislative Oversight Committee,
 22 at the direction of the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the
 23 General Assembly, as applicable, to explain why the NJ-EDRS has not
 24 been adapted to provide the notifications and the steps the department
 25 is taking to adapt the NJ-EDRS to provide the notifications. In the
 26 event that the Department of Veterans Affairs has not, as of the first
 27 day of the seventh month next following the date of enactment of
 28 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),
 29 commenced using notifications from the NJ-EDRS provided pursuant
 30 to paragraph (11) of subsection b. of section 16 of P.L.2003, c.221
 31 (C.26:8-24.1) to identify funeral homes at which the remains of a
 32 veteran, or the remains of an eligible spouse or eligible dependent of a
 33 veteran, were cremated and contact those funeral homes to request
 34 information as to whether those cremains have been claimed, the
 35 Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall appear
 36 before the Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, the
 37 Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, the Assembly
 38 Oversight, Reform, and Federal Relations Committee, or the Senate
 39 Legislative Oversight Committee, at the direction of the President of
 40 the Senate or the Speaker of the General Assembly, as applicable, to
 41 explain why the commissioner has not commenced with the
 42 implementation of this act and the steps the department is taking to
 43 ensure implementation.²³

44
 45 ³²⁶.] 5.³ (New section) The Commissioner of Health and the
 46 Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs ³[shall] may³
 47 each adopt rules and regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative

1 Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as shall be
 2 necessary to implement the provisions of this act.²

3

4 ²~~4.~~³~~7.~~²~~6.~~³ This act shall take effect immediately ², but
 5 shall remain inoperative until the first day of the seventh month next
 6 following enactment. The Commissioner of Health and the
 7 Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs may each take
 8 any anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary
 9 to implement the provisions of this act².

10

11

12

13

14 Requires Department of Veterans Affairs to verify unclaimed
 15 cremains of veterans, spouses, and dependents; requires funeral
 16 director to report to Department of Veterans Affairs possession of
 17 unclaimed veteran, spouse, and dependent cremains.