

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 4418

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 8, 2026

Sponsored by:

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Senator NILSA I. CRUZ-PEREZ

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

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SYNOPSIS

Revises Commission on Women Veterans.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee on October 15, 2026, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/11/2026)

1 AN ACT concerning the Commission on Women Veterans,
2 amending and supplementing N.J.S.38A:21-25, and repealing
3 P.L.2007, c.319.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. N.J.S.38A:21-25 is amended to read as follows:

9 38A:21-25. a. There is created in the Department of Veterans
10 Affairs the Commission on Women Veterans. The commission
11 shall work in collaboration with other State agencies and
12 appropriate groups to study and review the needs, priorities,
13 programs, and policies relating to women veterans, including, but
14 not limited to, housing, health care, job training, and outreach. The
15 commission shall ensure that all service providers and citizens are
16 aware of the needs and services available to women veterans and
17 make recommendations for community education and training
18 programs. The commission shall provide outreach in conjunction
19 with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other organizations to
20 educate, support, and **[recruit]** engage prospective veterans.

21 b. The commission shall consist of 15 members who are New
22 Jersey residents. The Governor, pursuant to section 2 of P.L. , c.
23 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), shall appoint 12
24 public members and, of the 12 appointed, nine shall be women
25 veterans. All public members shall be actively engaged in the
26 women veteran community through their involvement in activities
27 including, but not limited to, demonstrated leadership, advocacy,
28 service provision, or initiatives that support women veterans,
29 subject matter expertise in women veteran issues, or as a non-
30 military advocate for women veterans. There shall be appointed
31 one representative from each of the following branches of military
32 service **[who may also be affiliated with an organization named**
33 **below]**: the Army, the Air Force, the Coast Guard, the Marines,
34 **[and]** the Navy, the Space Force, if applicable, [. There shall also
35 be appointed by the Governor: one representative from the Veterans
36 of Foreign Wars, one representative from the American Legion, one
37 representative from the Disabled American Veterans, one
38 representative from the American Veterans, one representative
39 from**]** the New Jersey Army National Guard, **[one representative**
40 from**]** and the New Jersey Air National Guard **[**, and one
41 representative from the Military Order of the Purple Heart**]**. The
42 Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the
43 Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, and the
44 Director of the Division on Women in the Department of Children

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:

¹Senate SMV committee amendments adopted October 15, 2026.

1 and Families, or their respective designees, shall serve as ex-officio
2 members.

3 c. The public members shall serve for terms of three years and
4 until the appointment and qualification of their successors, except
5 that of the initial appointment of public members, four shall be
6 appointed for a term of three years, four shall be appointed for a
7 term of two years, and four shall be appointed for a term of one
8 year. ¹【The Governor may revise the term limits to balance
9 institutional knowledge.】 No member shall be allowed to serve for
10 more than two terms.¹

11 If any public member discontinues affiliation with the respective
12 veterans' organization, the member shall immediately resign
13 membership with the commission.

14 Any vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be
15 filled in the same manner as the original appointments are made.

16 d. The members of the commission shall serve without
17 compensation, but may be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable
18 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within the
19 limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the
20 commission for its purposes.

21 e. The commission shall organize as soon as may be practicable
22 after the appointment of a majority of its members and shall select
23 from among its members a chairperson and a vice chairperson, who
24 shall be responsible for the coordination of all activities of the
25 commission. The members shall select a secretary, who need not be
26 a member of the commission.

27 As deemed necessary by the chair of the commission,
28 subcommittees may be formed around focus areas such as
29 healthcare, including mental health, employment, housing, and
30 military sexual trauma.

31 f. The commission shall meet at the call of the chairperson and
32 hold hearings at such places as it shall designate. A meeting of the
33 commission may also be called upon the request of eight of the
34 commission members, and eight members of the commission shall
35 constitute a quorum at any meeting thereof. The commission shall
36 meet not less than quarterly.

37 g. The commission may conduct public hearings at such places
38 and at such times as it shall designate, at which it may solicit the
39 testimony of interested persons, groups, and the general public.
40 The public meetings shall be transcribed, and such transcriptions
41 shall be made available to the public and prominently posted on the
42 website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

43 h. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
44 avail itself of the services of such employees of any State, county,
45 or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as
46 it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes. The
47 Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide such organizational
48 and personnel support as the commission may request.

1 i. The commission shall prepare and submit an initial report to
2 the Governor, the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
3 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), and the Commissioner of the Department of
4 Veterans Affairs.

5 j. The commission shall prepare and submit annual reports
6 containing its findings, activities, and recommendations, including
7 any recommendations for administrative and legislative action that
8 it deems appropriate, to the Governor, the Legislature, and the
9 Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The reports
10 shall be made available to the public and prominently posted on the
11 website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

12 The commission shall periodically advise the ¹~~【Deputy】~~¹
13 Commissioner ~~【of the Department】~~ ¹of the Department¹ of
14 Veterans Affairs on its activities, findings, and recommendations.
15 (cf: N.J.S.38A:21-25)

16
17 2. (New section) a. The 12 public members of the Commission
18 on Women Veterans appointed by the Governor pursuant to
19 subsection b. of N.J.S.38A:21-25, shall be nominated by a veteran
20 organization through the Department of Veterans Affairs. The
21 nominees shall demonstrate honorable veteran status or substantial
22 professional experience serving women veterans; knowledge of
23 veteran systems, policies, or community-based services;
24 commitment to collaboration and Statewide representation; and the
25 ability to engage respectfully across diverse perspectives.

26 ¹~~【b. A review panel coordinated by the Department of Veterans~~
27 ~~Affairs, in consultation with the State Women Veterans~~
28 ~~Coordinator, shall assess the nominations.】~~¹ Nominations shall
29 prioritize diversity across geography, race, ethnicity, era of service,
30 and professional backgrounds to ensure that the commission reflects
31 the broad and evolving needs of women veterans in the State.
32 ¹~~【The Governor shall make the final appointments.~~

33 ~~c.】~~ ¹b.¹ The members of the commission shall: participate in
34 quarterly meetings and subcommittees, as appropriate; gather and
35 evaluate organizational feedback; assist with Statewide outreach
36 and listening sessions; and contribute to an annual State of Women
37 Veterans report.

38 ¹~~【d.】~~ ¹c.¹ As used in this section, “veteran organization” means a
39 veteran organization that qualifies as a section 501(c)(3) or
40 501(c)(19) tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue
41 Code, or a federally chartered Veterans’ Service Organization.

42
43 3. P.L.2007, c.319 (C.38A:3-38 et seq.) is repealed.

44
45 4. This act shall take effect immediately.