

SB

45

<target><bill>SB 45</bill><subject>SB
45</subject><comm>HFIN26</comm></target>

Senator Charlie Huggins
R-Rural Mat-Su



Senator Gene Therriault
R-North Pole, Valdez

ALASKA STATE SENATE

SPONSOR STATEMENT SENATE BILL 45

By the passage of this legislation, a new Veterans' Cemetery would be created in Fairbanks to serve those members of the military wishing to be buried in this specially designated cemetery. The United States standards for creating veterans' cemeteries suggests that designated cemeteries be established within 75 miles of any populated area to honor deceased military personnel. At this time, Fairbanks is home to a significant military population but does not have a designated Veterans' Cemetery.

The Veterans' Cemetery fund would be established as a sub account of the general fund to be used to support programs benefiting Alaska veterans. The fund would receive deposits through appropriation and by proceeds from the purchase of special veterans' license plates. The balance of the fund could be used for the construction, operation and maintenance of a Veterans' Cemetery.

Veterans' employment preferences are currently established in AS 39.25.150 however they are somewhat difficult to understand. The existing statute is rewritten for clarification and does not change the preferences already established. The employment preferences as rewritten are similar to most other United States and do not breach collective bargaining agreements within the State of Alaska.

We urge your support in this legislation regarding honor and benefits for Alaska's military veterans.



26th ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
STATE SENATE

www.aksenateminority.com www.aksenate.org

Senator Charlie Huggins 907-465-3878
907-465-4797

Senator Gene Therriault

For Immediate Release: February 10, 2009
Barry 465-3803

Press Contacts: John Manly 465-5369 or Tim Barry 465-3803

Bill to Establish Veterans' Cemetery in Interior Moves Out of Senate State Affairs Committee

JUNEAU – Legislation under which the State of Alaska would authorize the establishment and maintenance of a veterans' cemetery to serve the Interior and northern Alaska was approved by the Senate State Affairs committee.

SB 45, Sponsored by Sen. Charlie Huggins, R-Wasilla, and Sen. Gene Therriault, R-North Pole, gives the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs the authority to establish veterans' cemeteries and to set up a fund to provide for maintenance of the cemeteries. The bill also allows the Legislature to appropriate income from the sale of veterans' commemorative license plates to the cemetery fund and clarifies veterans' hiring preferences in state statutes.

"In addition to clarifying veterans' hire preferences, SB 45 sets up a mechanism to create and fund a veterans' cemetery in the Interior to complement the national cemeteries in Sitka and at Ft. Richardson," Huggins said. "This is an appropriate use of the revenues generated by the sale of special veterans' license plates, and a good way for us to express our appreciation for the service of these veterans."

"It is estimated there are about 100,000 veterans in Alaska, including roughly 11,000 in the Interior," Therriault said. "We should be prepared to honor them as they deserve for their sacrifices made in defense of our nation. I appreciate the quick action by the State Affairs committee to move the bill forward."

SB 45 has next been referred to the Senate Labor and Commerce committee.

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FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
Bill Version: CSSB 45(STA)
(S) Publish Date: 2/11/09

Identifier (file name): SB45-DMVA-VS-2-6-09

Dept. Affected: Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs

Title An act relating to...authorizing DMVA to establish and maintain AK veterans' cemeteries; est AK cemetery fund...

RDU Military and Veterans Affairs

Component Veterans Services

Sponsor Senator(s) Huggins, Theriault

Requester State Affairs

Component Number 421

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required		Information				
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES							
Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Travel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.0	250.0	250.0	250.0
Supplies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Land & Structures	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grants & Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.0	250.0	250.0	250.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
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FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
1002 Federal Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1003 GF Match	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1004 GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.0	240.0	240.0	240.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1037 GF/Mental Health	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Interagency Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.0	250.0	250.0	250.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Full-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temporary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill establishes an Alaska cemetery fund.

Our estimate for the amount of special request plates commemorating Alaska veterans is based on 2 year history of special veterans plates purchased per DOA/Division of Motor Vehicles. DMVA estimates that 100 sets of plates will be purchased annually at \$100/set.

Operations and maintenance of the Veteran's cemetery includes contracted services for maintenance, utilities, communications, supplies and materials is estimated at \$250,000 per year beginning in FY2012. Out years reflect additional receipts from sale of special license plates.

Prepared by: McHugh Pierre, Legislative Liaison/Communications Director
Division: National Guard Military Headquarters/Office of the Commissioner
Approved by: Commissioner Craig Campbell
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Phone 465-4402
Date/Time 2/06/09 @ 11:00 am
Date 2/6/2009

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By: Nadine Winters
Introduced: 03/12/09
Adopted: 03/12/09

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

RESOLUTION NO. 2009 - 08

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A STATE VETERANS' CEMETERY

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs there are over 9,400 veterans living in the Fairbanks area; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2000 Census Alaska has the highest percentage of veterans per capita than any other state; and

WHEREAS, Interior Alaska veterans deserve access to a military cemetery that honors their service; and

WHEREAS, the nearest cemetery to Fairbanks is Fort Richardson National Cemetery located 350 miles away; and

WHEREAS, a State Veterans' Cemetery in the Interior would better serve the needs of veterans and their families, and provide a place that is centrally located in the Interior for soldiers to be laid to rest with full military funeral honors; and

WHEREAS, funding to establish and maintain a state veterans' cemetery could be made available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Cemetery Grants Program, and through money set aside from special license plates purchases and gifts designated to a special account; and

35 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly of the
36 Fairbanks North Star Borough supports the creation of a State Veterans' Cemetery in
37 the Interior.

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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be sent
40 to the Honorable Governor Sarah Palin and the Alaska Interior Delegation.

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42 PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 12th DAY OF MARCH 2009.

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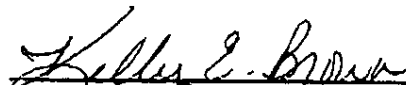
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Kelly Brown, Deputy
Presiding Officer

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ATTEST:

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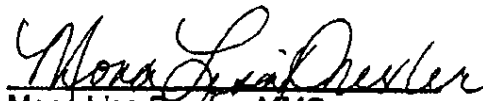
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Mona Lisa Drexler, MMC
Municipal Borough Clerk

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Ayes: Brown, Blanchard II, Musick, Sattley, Stringer, Wilson

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Noes: None

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Excused: Beck, Hopkins, Winters

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AARP Alaska
3601 C Street
Suite 1420
Anchorage, AK 99503

T 1-866-227-7447
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February 5, 2009

The Honorable Linda Menard, Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB45 (Therriault and Huggins)--Support

Dear Chair Menard:

On behalf of the AARP members of Alaska, we urge you and your colleagues on the Senate State Affairs Committee to support SB 45, authored by Senators Gene Therriault and Charlie Huggins.

SB 45 would establish a fund for the maintenance of and development of future veterans' cemeteries in Alaska. As you know, the only veterans' cemeteries are in Anchorage and Sitka yet the Fairbanks area alone has over 11,000 veterans, many of whom are AARP members. Certainly veterans and their families would like to have a cemetery closer to where they live.

Burial in a veterans' cemetery is one of the last honors we can offer our fellow citizens who have served in the Armed Forces. We think it is a well-deserved tribute to these men and women who served our country. It is a proper thank-you to the veterans and their families.

Undoubtedly there may be some costs associated with a new cemetery. SB 45 does provide some provisions for partial funding although additional funding might be required. Our veterans didn't weigh the costs when they joined the armed services. Surely we can bear the costs of this final thank-you to them.

SB 45 also has provisions for state employment preferences. AARP has no official position on this.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on SB 45.

HEALTH / FINANCES / CONNECTING / GIVING / ENJOYING

Jennie Chin Hansen, President
William D. Novelli, Chief Executive Officer

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marie Darlin

Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Vice-Chair Kevin Meyer
Senator Hollis French
Senator Albert Kookesh
Senator Joe Paskvan
Senator Gene Therriault
Senator Charlie Huggins

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ISSUES FOR 2009 SESSION

The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans

Support Statements

1. ***State Veterans' Service Officers Grant:*** For over 50 years, Alaska service organizations have been assisting our state veterans with much needed assistance in receiving state and federal benefits to which they are entitled. Each year, through the assisted representation of these State Service Officers, our veterans have received over 25 million dollars in federal benefits. VA statistics have shown that veterans representing themselves receive some \$7,000 less in annual benefits than those represented by a State Service Officer. This coming year, we are budgeted the same grant amount as last year, \$651,000, which is part of the Governor's budget under the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. These dollars will provide salaries and travel for the Joint Venture for the coming year. Our Service Officers cover the entire state, working closely with our members, the Alaska Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans Affairs, providing services to our State's veterans. This coming year will be exceptionally important as we provide for our returning Gulf veterans, assisting them with the complex laws and paperwork necessary to receive all of the benefits to which they are entitled. *Therefore, we ask the full support of our Legislature in approving the Governor's budget proposed grant of \$651,000.*
2. ***Property Tax exemption:*** Currently, veterans rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs at 50% or more disabled and senior citizens 65 and older receive a tax exemption on the first \$150,000.00 of their annual property tax. Our concern is the loss of this exemption. This could be devastating to both the seniors and veterans who, in many cases, receive the lowest of incomes, with many living on fixed incomes and concerned about losing their existing home mortgages. *Therefore, we request the tax exemption for the Disabled Veterans and Seniors remains.*
3. ***Flag Amendment:*** The flag amendment is an issue unresolved. Over 80% of Americans polled believe that our flag should be protected by amending our Constitution. We do not expect this issue to go unresolved forever; however, should it pass the United States Congress to constitutionally protect our flag, we request that Alaska be the first State to ratify the amendment to the Constitution. *Therefore, we ask our Legislature that, if Congress passes the amendment, our Alaska Legislature be the first to ratify that amendment.*
4. ***State Veterans Cemetery:*** If the issue of establishing a State Veterans Cemetery comes before legislature we request the legislature to consider supporting such legislation.

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

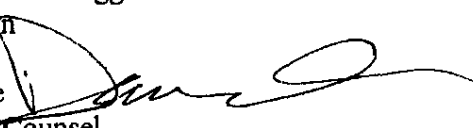
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

February 3, 2009

SUBJECT: Veterans, former prisoners of war, and members of the national guard (SB 45)

TO: Senator Charlie Huggins
Attn: Sharon

FROM: Dan Wayne 
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

Section 1 would allow the legislature to appropriate, to the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund, fees from the sale of special request motor vehicle license plates that commemorate Alaska veterans.

Sec. 2 adds certain gifts, donations and grants related to establishing and maintaining Alaska veterans' cemeteries to the list, under AS 37.05.146(c), of programs for which receipts are accounted for separately. (Receipts from programs on this list are not appropriated from the unrestricted general fund).

Sec. 3 creates a special account in the general fund called the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund., from which amounts may be appropriated for building and operating Alaska veterans' cemeteries.

Sec. 4 adds a requirement that state personnel rules must provide for the grant of employment preference rights to members of the national guard under AS 39.25.159, a statute under which veterans, former prisoners of war and members of the national guard already receive preference when they apply for a position, either in the form of extra points being added to their numerical rating (when assessments using numerical ratings are used in hiring), or, when hiring is based on assessments that are not based on numerical ratings, a guarantee that they will be considered for the position.

Senator Charlie Huggins
February 3, 2009
Page 2

Sec. 5 and 6 amend AS 39.25.159, a statute with the catch line "employment preference for veterans and former prisoners of war," by combining repetitious language from subsections (a) and (c) and moving it to a new subsection, and changing "preference," in subsections (a) and (c), to the more explicit "employment preference as a matter of form."

Sec. 7 defines "member of the national guard" under AS 39.25.159.

Sec. 8 adds two new subsections to AS 39.25.159. Subsection (e) consolidates and restores language that the bill, as noted above, removes from AS 39.25.159(c) and (d). Subsection (f) limits the applicability of subsections (a), (c), and (e) so that they may not be interpreted to amend the terms of a collective bargaining agreement.

Sec. 9 adds language permitting the department of military and veterans affairs to establish and maintain Alaska veterans' cemeteries, allowing the department to raise funds for that purpose, and listing administrative duties and options of the department, including the duty, or in some instances the option, to adopt regulations.

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

DCW:plm
09-063.plm

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Alaska Commission on Aging

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110693
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0693
PHONE: (907) 465-3250
FAX: (907) 465-1398

February 23, 2009

Senator Charlie Huggins
Alaska State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Subject: Support for SB 45

Dear Senator Huggins:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) encourages support for SB 45 sponsored by you and Senator Therriault to establish, maintain, and develop the Alaska veterans' cemetery fund.

Although Alaskan veterans come from all areas of the state, the only designated veteran cemeteries in Alaska are located in Anchorage and Sitka. We believe that veterans and their families would appreciate having a cemetery closer to where they live. Burial in a veterans' cemetery is a well-deserved honor and tribute to those who have served our country and their families.


Partial funding for this program would come from the sales of special request plates commemorating Alaska veterans, according to estimates provided by the bill's fiscal note, and additional funding may be required. Nevertheless, persons who joined the armed forces did not allow the personal costs of their service to dissuade their decision to serve and protect our nation.

ACoA supports SB 45 and believes that establishment of a veterans' cemetery is our responsibility and obligation to honor veterans through this final gesture of gratitude. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director (465-4879), should you have any questions regarding our position. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Sharon Howerton-Clark
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,


Denise Daniello,
ACoA Executive Director

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 20, 2009

The Honorable Sarah Palin
Governor
State of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Palin:

I write to underscore the request of a Fairbanks veteran to urge your support and action to advance an Alaska State Veterans Cemetery, likely to be located in Alaska's Interior. During my Veterans Town Hall meeting in Fairbanks earlier this week, veteran Morgan Solomon asked that I approach you about this issue. His request, in firm and colorful language, received the overwhelming support of the more than 40 veterans in attendance, and my support as well.

As you know, at issue is a federal program which provides support to states to establish veterans' cemeteries. I commend you for including \$250,000 in your original Fiscal 2010 capital budget submission for initial architecture and engineering for this cause. But I was disappointed that you eliminated it in your revised budget as part of your overall budget cutting exercise. Meanwhile, I understand the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs can submit a grant pre-application to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for construction of the cemetery, but has not yet done so.

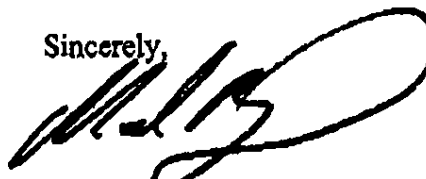
The VA estimates that 1,500 veterans will die in the next 10 years in the Fairbanks area. A Veterans Cemetery in the Interior is broadly supported by Alaska's veterans community and would serve as a relatively affordable yet highly visible way to demonstrate our respect to the men and women who have served and sacrificed so much for our state and nation.

Governor Palin
February 20, 2009
Page 2

As a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, I am pleased to work with you and your departments on this vital issue and to ensure that a pre-application is well received by the VA when it is submitted.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
U.S. Senator

CC:

Morgan Solomon
LTG (AK) Craig Christianson, DMVA
Senator Gary Stevens, President, Alaska State Senate
Senator Joe Thomas
Senator Charlie Huggins
Representative Mike Chenault, Speaker, Alaska House of Representatives
Representative David Guttenberg

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: CSSB 45(STA)
 (S) Publish Date: 2/11/09

Identifier (file name): SB45-DMVA-VS-2-6-09 Dept. Affected: Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs
 Title An act relating to...authorizing DMVA to establish and RDU Military and Veterans Affairs
maintain AK veterans' cemeteries; est AK cemetery fund... Component Veterans Services
 Sponsor Senator(s) Huggins, Theriault
 Requester State Affairs Component Number 421

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required		Information				
	FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES							
Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Travel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.0	250.0	250.0	250.0
Supplies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Land & Structures	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grants & Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.0	250.0	250.0	250.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1003 GF Match	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1004 GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.0	240.0	240.0	240.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1037 GF/Mental Health	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Interagency Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.0	250.0	250.0	250.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temporary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill establishes an Alaska cemetery fund.

Our estimate for the amount of special request plates commemorating Alaska veterans is based on 2 year history of special veterans plates purchased per DOA/Division of Motor Vehicles. DMVA estimates that 100 sets of plates will be purchased annually at \$100/set.

Operations and maintenance of the Veteran's cemetery includes contracted services for maintenance, utilities, communications, supplies and materials is estimated at \$250,000 per year beginning in FY2012. Out years reflect additional receipts from sale of special license plates.

Prepared by: McHugh Pierre, Legislative Liaison/Communications Director Phone 465-4402
 Division: National Guard Military Headquarters/Office of the Commissioner Date/Time 2/06/09 @ 11:00 am
 Approved by: Commissioner Craig Campbell Date 2/6/2009
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs