WA State Legislative Update

Dave Casteel, WA State Council President

As I write this, we are in Day 28 of the 2023 105-day Regular Session. As you know, when the new biennium starts, all bills that did not pass the last session die and must be reintroduced to be considered.

As of Friday, February 3rd, there were 31 veterans-related bills introduced—everything from extending:

B&O tax credits for businesses hiring military, to spouse

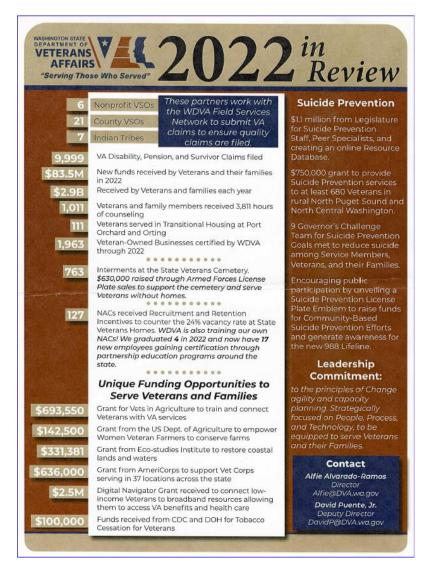
employment issues, to mental health issues, to recognizing schools that "show a commitment to students and families connected to our military," to

property tax exemptions for service-connected disabled veterans.

You can find Friday's list here (WDVA Legislative Updates) (updates weekly on Fridays).



Or use this QR Code on with your smart phone:



We have one MOAA member, Col Bob Mead, USAF, Ret., on the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC).



The VAAC is hosted by the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and presents four Townhalls around the state each year. The first of which was held in Vancouver on Feb 1.

David Puente Jr., who was recently appointed as WDVA Director after Alfie retired Jan 31, attended as did David Holt, newly appointed Director of the Portland Health Care System which also serves the SW WA area.

The WDVA staff gave several very informative presentations and one of the "leave behinds" was the WDVA 2022 in Review Flyer to the left.

One of the newest programs is the "Digital Navigator Program" which will be of interest to those of you who work with homeless or low-income veterans.

Through the "Digital Navigator" program WDVA has a limited number of initial 5G phones (and service) from T-Mobile available to veterans due to a \$2.5M grant (see WDVA 2022 In Review flyer) and is free of charge to veterans with IRS Form 1040 incomes of \$73,000 or less (contact presenter jeff.powell@dva.wa.gov). Go to https://www.dva.wa.gov/ or 1-800-562-2308 benefits@dva.wa.gov for complete information.