

2020 SESSION

INTRODUCED

20104030D

SENATE BILL NO. 321

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 6, 2020

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.2-2001.5, relating to the Department of Veterans Services; eligibility for veteran status under state and local laws; change in treatment of certain discharges.*

Patron—Lewis

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 2.2-2001.5 as follows:

§ 2.2-2001.5. Eligibility for veteran status under state and local laws; change in treatment of certain discharges.

A. Any person who was separated from active military, naval, or air service with an other than honorable discharge due solely to such person's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression may petition the Department to have his discharge recorded with the Department as honorable. Persons whose discharge status is changed pursuant to such petition shall be afforded the same rights, privileges, and benefits authorized by state law and local ordinances as any other veteran who was honorably discharged.

B. The Commissioner shall:

1. Verify, upon request, that a person has had the characterization of his discharge changed to honorable by the Department pursuant to this section;

2. Initiate efforts to inform former members of the active military, naval, or air service that they may be entitled to benefits and privileges that were previously denied;

3. Publish and distribute materials to all entities of state government and the political subdivisions of the Commonwealth describing the provisions of this section; and

4. Adopt any reasonable regulations necessary for the implementation and administration of this section.

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