

# HOUSE BILL No. 6319

December 10, 1998, Introduced by Rep. Willard and referred to the Committee on Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs.

A bill to create a veterans ombudsman for each veterans facility in this state; to prescribe the duties and responsibilities of the veterans ombudsmen; and to prescribe the powers and duties of certain state agencies and officials.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1       Sec. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the  
2 "veterans ombudsmen act".

3       Sec. 2. As used in this act:

4       (a) "Commanders group" means the commanders of the veterans  
5 service organizations recognized by the department of military  
6 and veterans affairs.

7       (b) "Ombudsman" means an individual appointed under section  
8 3 to carry out the duties prescribed in section 4.

9       (c) "Veterans facility" means either of the following:

- 1           (i) The Grand Rapids home for veterans.
- 2           (ii) The D.J. Jacobetti home for veterans.
- 3           Sec. 3. (1) A veterans ombudsman is created within the  
4 department of military and veterans affairs for each veterans  
5 facility in this state.
- 6           (2) The governor shall appoint each of the ombudsmen created  
7 by subsection (1) from a list of persons submitted by the com-  
8 manders group. The appointments shall be with the advice and  
9 consent of the senate.
- 10          Sec. 4. The ombudsmen shall do all of the following:
- 11          (a) Serve as visible and effective advocates for veterans in  
12 the veterans facilities.
- 13          (b) Receive complaints from a veteran, relative of a veter-  
14 an, or any other source concerning the services performed at a  
15 veterans facility or any other condition of a veterans facility  
16 in this state.
- 17          (c) Investigate complaints received under subdivision (b)  
18 and make a written report of the investigation.
- 19          (d) Distribute a copy of the report made under subdivision  
20 (c) to all of the following:
- 21           (i) The person in charge of the veterans facility.
- 22           (ii) The clerk of the house of representatives and the sec-  
23 retary of the senate.
- 24           (iii) The director of the veterans affairs directorate  
25 within the department of military and veterans affairs.
- 26          (e) Make recommendations on ways to alleviate the causes of  
27 each complaint received under subdivision (b).

1           Sec. 5. (1) Each ombudsman shall serve for a 2-year term  
2 unless removed by the governor. An ombudsman may succeed himself  
3 or herself. If a vacancy occurs, the governor shall make an  
4 appointment in the same manner as the original appointment.

5           (2) The governor may remove an ombudsman for incompetence,  
6 dereliction of duty, malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in  
7 office, or any other good cause.

8           (3) Each ombudsman shall serve without compensation.  
9 However, an ombudsman may be reimbursed for his or her actual and  
10 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of his or her  
11 official duties as an ombudsman. The expenses incurred shall be  
12 paid from an appropriation within the department of military and  
13 veterans affairs for that purpose.