



THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF IOWA



2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

1. Veterans' Treatment Courts

The American Legion urges the State of Iowa to establish and expand Veterans Treatment Courts.

Veteran Treatment Courts are hybrid Drug Courts and Mental Health Courts and have evolved out of the growing need for a treatment court model designed specifically for justice-involved veterans to maximize efficiency and economize resources.

Many veterans that enter the veteran treatment courts are not aware of their federal, state, county and a variety of additional benefit programs, in particular, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits for compensation, pension and health care.

Grouping justice-involved veterans into a specific court docket significantly expedites access to veteran-specific resources, including benefits and treatment earned through military service and provides options for treatment as opposed to incarceration.

2. Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers and Veterans

The American Legion supports efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the timely and successful transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market.

The American Legion requests that the Governor of Iowa, the Iowa Legislature and all Departments and branches of the Government of Iowa as well as all counties and municipalities take appropriate steps to ensure that servicemembers and veterans be trained, tested and evaluated and that they have the opportunity to obtain a credential (i.e., licensure, certification, certificate, degree, etc.) that may be required in the civilian workforce.

The American Legion supports efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the training, education and prior experience provided by the United States Military.

3. Veterans Property Tax Exemption

The American Legion requests the State of Iowa adjust the veterans' property tax exemption to \$5,000.

4. Support Funding for Existing Veteran Benefits

The American Legion supports funding existing state veterans' benefits and programs to include, but not limited to the following:

- a. Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
- b. Iowa Veterans Cemetery
- c. Iowa Veterans Trust Fund
- d. Iowa Veterans Home
- e. Military Home Ownership Program
- f. Injured Veteran Grant Program
- g. County Veterans Affairs Allocation Funds