

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

**2020 REGULAR SESSION**

**ENROLLED**

**Committee Substitute**

**for**

**House Bill 4693**

BY DELEGATES PACK, STEELE, COOPER, PAYNTER,

SUMMERS AND J. JEFFRIES

[Passed March 7, 2020; in effect ninety days from passage.]



1 AN ACT to amend and reenact §19-1-12 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating  
2 to renaming the Veteran and Warriors to Agriculture Program to the Veterans and Heroes  
3 to Agriculture Program; renaming Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture fund; eliminating  
4 outdated language; and authorizing the Commissioner of Agriculture to expand the scope  
5 of the program to additional classes of persons.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 1. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.**

**§19-1-12. Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program and fund.**

1 (a) *Legislative findings.* —

2 West Virginians have a longstanding tradition of service in the armed forces of the United  
3 States. Many veterans suffer from physical and emotional afflictions and are often unable to find  
4 gainful employment upon returning from combat. Exploring opportunities to engage West  
5 Virginia’s veterans in agriculture is beneficial to the health and welfare of veterans, as well as to  
6 the future of West Virginia’s agricultural economy.

7 (b) *Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program.* —

8 The Department of Agriculture shall develop a Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture  
9 Program to integrate veterans into the field of agriculture, and support veterans currently working  
10 in agriculture. These programs may include, but are not limited to, using post-mine land for  
11 agricultural development, promoting high tunnel crops and production, expanding the apiary  
12 industry, developing cottage industries, exploring niche crops, raising more livestock, increasing  
13 the aquaculture industry and helping veterans promote their agricultural products through farmers  
14 markets and cooperatives. The department may call on the Department of Veterans’ Assistance  
15 and the state’s Adjutant General for assistance to recruit and train eligible veterans, and develop  
16 and support the program.

17 (c) *Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Fund.* —The Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture  
18 Fund is continued, but is renamed the Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Fund. The fund shall

19 consist of income from leasing the department's property for the program, surplus funds which  
20 may be transferred from the fund created by §19-12A-6a, gifts, grants and donations, and  
21 legislative appropriations which may be made to support the program. Expenditures from the fund  
22 shall be used exclusively, in accordance with appropriations by the Legislature, to pay costs, fees  
23 and expenses necessary to administer the Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program.

24 (d) Notwithstanding any provision in this code to the contrary, should the Department of  
25 Agriculture deem it necessary to provide land for activities within this program, it is exempt from  
26 the purchasing requirements as they relate to the competitive leasing of state property.

27 (e) The commissioner may propose emergency or legislative rules for approval in  
28 accordance with the provisions of §29A-3-1 *et seq.* to effectuate the provisions of this section.

29 (f) *Expansion of Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program.* — The Legislature finds  
30 that West Virginians also proudly answers the call to serve domestically in emergency response  
31 and law enforcement roles, including as police officers, sheriffs, firefighters, emergency medical  
32 technicians, and first responders. The Legislature further finds that farming, including growing  
33 corn, is a process that involves more than digging a hole, putting a seed in with dirt on top, and  
34 adding water. To that end, the commissioner is hereby authorized to expand the scope of the  
35 Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture Program to provide agriculture assistance and training to  
36 additional West Virginia heroes that will allow these brave individuals to continue to answer the  
37 call of duty by producing and providing fresh, healthy, and local food to their fellow West  
38 Virginians.

The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

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*Chairman, House Committee*

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*Chairman, Senate Committee*

Originating in the House.

In effect ninety days from passage.

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*Clerk of the House of Delegates*

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*Clerk of the Senate*

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*Speaker of the House of Delegates*

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*President of the Senate*

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The within ..... this the.....  
day of ....., 2020.

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*Governor*