

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2949

By Delegates Butler and Ridenour

[Introduced February 25, 2025; referred to the
Committee on Government Organization then the
Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section,
 2 designated §9A-1-13, relating to prohibiting a person from receiving compensation for
 3 assisting another person to obtain veterans' benefits, except as permitted under federal
 4 law.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' ASSISTANCE.

§9A-1-13. Compensation for services related to veterans' benefits matters

1 (a) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have
 2 the following meanings.

3 "Compensation" means payment of money, a thing of value or a financial benefit.

4 "Person" means an individual, corporation, business trust, estate, trust, partnership,
 5 limited liability company, association, joint venture, public corporation, government or
 6 governmental subdivision, agency or instrumentality or any other legal or commercial entity.

7 "Veterans' benefits matter" means the preparation, presentation or prosecution of a claim
 8 affecting an individual who has filed or expressed an intent to file a claim for a benefit, program,
 9 service, commodity, function or status, entitlement to which is determined under the laws and
 10 regulations administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States
 11 Department of Defense pertaining to veterans, their dependents, their survivors and any other
 12 individual eligible for such benefits.

13 (b) A person may not:

14 (1) Receive compensation for preparation, presentation or prosecution of, or advising,
 15 consulting or assisting an individual with, a veterans' benefits matter, except as permitted under
 16 federal law;

17 (2) Receive compensation for referring an individual to another person to prepare, present
 18 or prosecute, or advise, consult or assist the individual with, a veterans' benefits matter;

19 (3) Guarantee, either directly or by implication, that any individual is certain to receive

20 specific veterans' benefits or that any individual is certain to receive a specific level, percentage or
21 amount of veterans' benefits; or

22 (4) Receive excessive or unreasonable fees as compensation for preparation,
23 presentation or prosecution of, or advising, consulting or assisting an individual with, a veterans'
24 benefits matter. The factors articulated in 38 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 14.636 (2024)
25 govern determinations of whether a fee is excessive or unreasonable.

26 (c) A person seeking to receive compensation for preparation, presentation or prosecution
27 of, or advising, consulting or assisting an individual with, a veterans' benefits matter shall, before
28 rendering any services, memorialize in a written agreement signed by both parties that adheres to
29 all criteria specified in 38 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 14.636 (2024) all terms regarding
30 the individual's payment of fees for services rendered.

31 (d) A violation of this section constitutes a violation of the West Virginia Consumer Credit
32 and Protection Act, §46A-6-1 et seq. of this code.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide that a person may not receive compensation for services related to veterans' benefits matters except as permitted under federal law. It also provides that a person may not receive compensation for referring an individual to another person to provide services related to veterans' benefits matters. It provides that a person seeking to receive compensation for services related to veterans' benefits matters must, before rendering any services, memorialize in a written agreement that is signed by both parties and that complies with federal regulations all terms regarding the payment of fees for services rendered. It provides that a person may not receive excessive or unreasonable fees for services related to veterans' benefits matters. A violation of the provisions of the bill constitutes a violation of the West Virginia Consumer Credit and protection Act §46A-6-1 et seq. of this code.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.