

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY AFFAIRS, AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2022 Interim

June 22, 2022

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 1st meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection was held on Wednesday, June 22, 2022, at 10:00 AM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Walker Thomas, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Walker Thomas, Co-Chair; Senators Jimmy Higdon, Alice Forgy Kerr, Stephen Meredith, Dennis Parrett, Wil Schroder, Brandon Smith, Whitney Westerfield, and Mike Wilson; Representatives John Blanton, Kevin D. Bratcher, Chris Freeland, Chris Fugate, Jim Gooch Jr., Mark Hart, Matthew Koch, Patti Minter, Scott Sharp, Ashley Tackett Laferty, and Bill Wesley.

Guests: Lee Robertson, Distinguished Veteran; Brigadier General (Ret.) Steve Bullard, Executive Director, Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs; Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Dr. Dallas Kratzer, C4 Grant Manager, KCMA; Dr. Jeffrey Sun, Professor and SKILL Collaborative Director, University of Louisville; Dr. David McFaddin, President, Eastern Kentucky University; Barbara Kent, Director, EKV Office of Military & Veterans Affairs.

LRC Staff: Jessica Zeh and Logan Schaaf.

Distinguished Veteran

Lee “Mr. Western” Robertson spoke to the committee about his service in the Pacific in World War II and his work for Western Kentucky University over the last sixty years. Mr. Robertson turned 100 earlier in the month. He received challenge coins from the committee, the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, the Governor’s Office, and received a quilt of valor from the Capital City Quilts of Valor group.

Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs

Brigadier General (Ret.) Steve Bullard, Director of the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs; Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Dr. Dallas Kratzer, C4 Grant Manager for the KCMA; and Dr. Jeffrey Sun, Professor and SKILL Collaborative Director for the University of Louisville delivered a presentation on Cybersecurity, Certifications, Careers,

and Communities (C4). Gen. Bullard said that the C4 Program is the third phase of a grant program. The KCMA is partnered with the University of Louisville for this program, which began in February of 2020.

Dr. Sun provided an overview of the C4 Program, including its certification workshops, cyber experiences, and work with employers on cybersecurity. Dr. Sun noted that a major goal of the program is to ensure that participants are fluent in cybersecurity and that they encourage their family, friends, and coworkers to take it seriously. He also emphasized the importance of integrating veterans.

Dr. Kratzer highlighted the efforts of the SKILL Program, a workforce initiative supporting veterans in their post-military careers. He spoke about the coming launch of a program designed to foster compliance with the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Continuum (CMMC), an upcoming Department of Defense cybersecurity effort.

Gen. Bullard covered some of the upcoming legislative priorities for the KCMA and spoke about including the proximity to a military base on real estate disclosures.

Eastern Kentucky University

Dr. David McFaddin, President of Eastern Kentucky University, and Barbara Kent, Director of the EKU Office of Military & Veterans Affairs, spoke about EKU's efforts to serve veterans. Dr. McFaddin highlighted EKU's accolades, including being named the number one military friendly school in Kentucky and number three in the U.S.

Ms. Kent covered the four main aspects of EKU's VETS Ready Program: top-down support and resources, pathways to degree completion, campus and community partnerships, and program and faculty. The VETS Ready Opportunity Portal allows veterans and service members to plan their path to degree completion. At the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, 1540 active duty service members, veterans, military dependents, reserve members, and military spouses were enrolled in EKU. Ms. Kent spoke about EKU's grant proposal to the Department of Education to establish a Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) Federal Trio program, which would prepare first-generation, low-income veterans to enter postsecondary education at no cost to the veteran. EKU expects to receive notification of the award in August or September of this year.

Gen. Bullard praised the efforts of Ms. Kent. Senator Meredith asked how Dr. McFaddin and Ms. Kent anticipated the growth of the VETS Ready Program. Ms. Kent said, in response to Sen. Meredith's question about the growth of VET ready program, that three years ago, the goal was 2000 students by 2024. The pandemic disrupted some recruiting efforts, but enrollment continues to grow. Responding to another question from Senator Meredith, Ms. Kent said that the program is marketed online and in person on military bases.

Representative Wesley praised EKU's service to veterans. In response to Representative Sharp, Ms. Kent invited all of the committee members to visit the campus to see the programs, and Dr. McFaddin mentioned new facility needs for future growth. He also noted that there could be premiums added to the performance funding model for service to veterans.

Review of Administrative Regulation

The committee took no action on the referred administrative regulation, 800 KAR 001:020 Emergency - Team Western Kentucky Tornado Relief Fund.

With no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m. The second meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection will be on July 20, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.