

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

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2024 Interim

August 28, 2024

Call to Order and Roll Call

The Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection held its third meeting of the 2024 Interim on August 28, 2024, at 11:00 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; Senator Rick Girdler, Co-Chair; Senators Karen Berg, Gary Boswell, Matthew Deneen, Jimmy Higdon, Stephen Meredith, Whitney Westerfield, Gex Williams, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Steve Bratcher, Stephanie Dietz, Myron Dossett, Courtney Gilbert, Mark Hart, DJ Johnson, Matthew Koch, Scott Lewis, Candy Massaroni, Marianne Proctor, Rebecca Raymer, Scott Sharp, Sarah Stalker, Ashley Tackett Laferty, and Bill Wesley.

Guests: Chapel Tinius, Miss Kentucky; Josh Keats, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS); Mike Sunseri, Deputy Executive Director, KOHS; Juan Renaud, Deputy Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs; Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Dr. Dallas Kratzer, Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs; John Hughes, Senior Manager of Public Affairs, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce; Callie Miracle, Workforce Development Manager, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce; Michael Grimes, Strategy and Growth – Public Sector, Videra Health; and John “Chase” Stevens, Chief Experience Officer, North South Consulting Group.

LRC Staff: Jessica Zeh, Mark Mitchell, and Logan Schaaf.

Approval of July Minutes

On a motion and a second, the July 30, 2024 meeting minutes were approved.

Distinguished Guest

Chapel Tinius, Miss Kentucky, was honored by the committee as a distinguished guest and presented with a VMAPP Challenge Coin by Senator Wilson.

Kentucky Office of Homeland Security

Josh Keats, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS), and Mike Sunseri, Deputy Executive Director, KOHS, provided an overview of the history and mission of the KOHS and an update on its activities, including antiterrorism, cyber safety, election security, and the prevention of school violence. Additionally, they discussed the operations of the 911 Services Board, KOHS's funding, and interoperability with other law enforcement agencies.

Responding to a question from Senator Berg, Mr. Keats discussed contingency plans for potential disasters, including nuclear accidents or attacks.

Responding to a question from Senator Higdon, Mr. Keats and Mr. Sunseri discussed efforts to overcome communication issues faced by first responders throughout the state.

Responding to a question from Representative Sharp, Mr. Keats and Mr. Sunseri highlighted efforts to address interoperability issues in rural areas.

Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations

Juan Renaud, Deputy Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, discussed the referred Administrative Regulations (017 KAR 006:020 and 017 KAR 006:030) and their proposed amendments.

Representative Massaroni, Senator Boswell, and Representative Sharp expressed concerns with the amendments to 017 KAR 006:020.

Senator Berg, Representative Koch, and Senator Deneen expressed support for the proposed amendments to 017 KAR 006:020.

017 KAR 006:020 Proposed - Kentucky Women Veterans Program and coordinating committee. Administrative procedures.

Amendments approved by roll call vote, with 18 Yes votes, three No votes, and one Pass.

017 KAR 006:030 Proposed - Kentucky Wounded or Disabled Veterans Program. Administrative procedures.

Amendments approved by voice vote.

Military Family Assistance and Support Trust

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Dr. Dallas Kratzer, Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs, discussed the Military Family Assistance Trust Fund (MFAST), including its purpose, financial status, key activities, and future goals.

Representative Dietz and Representative Gilbert praised the MFAST and Dr. Kratzer.

Responding to a question from Representative Johnson, Dr. Kratzer discussed the National Guard Adoption Program.

Responding to a question from Representative Bratcher, Dr. Kratzer said that the maximum amount the National Guard Adoption Program pays is \$5,000-\$7,000 for an adoption, but that some adoptions can exceed \$10,000.

Kentucky Chamber of Commerce - Military Hiring Academy

John Hughes, Senior Manager of Public Affairs, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, and Callie Miracle, Workforce Development Manager, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, discussed the Chamber's Military Hiring Academy, highlighting the reasons businesses hire veterans, the Academy's business partnerships, and employer testimonials.

Representative Koch praised the Chamber's work on behalf of active duty military members and veterans.

Responding to a question from Senator Boswell, Ms. Miracle discussed the development of the Chamber's disability hiring academy.

Responding to questions from Representative Bratcher, Mr. Hughes discussed the potential effects of the state's income tax policies on the decisions of veterans to retire in or out of state.

Videra Health with North South Consulting Group: Scalable AI Tools for Supporting Kentucky Behavioral Health

Michael Grimes, Strategy and Growth - Public Sector, Videra Health, and John "Chase" Stevens, Chief Experience Officer, North South Consulting Group, discussed potential tools for supporting behavioral health. These include artificial intelligence (AI) video-based assessments, patient engagement chatbots, and AI notetaking.

Responding to questions from Representative Bratcher, Mr. Grimes and Mr. Stevens provided an overview of the electronic mental health assessment process.

Responding to a question from Representative Johnson, Mr. Stevens said that the Videra Health platform is not yet actively used by Kentucky service members.

Responding to questions from Senator Berg, Mr. Grimes and Mr. Stevens discussed data collection on potential suicide prevention and liability for instances of missed signs of suicide risk. Senator Berg requested additional data from Videra.

Representative Gilbert requested data on the effectiveness of AI mental health counseling.

Mr. Grimes discussed the construction of Videra's AI model.

Adjournment

With no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 PM.