

# **Office of the Veteran Advocate Nominating Committee**



**Executive Office of Health & Human Services**

**February 21, 2023**

**2:00 - 3:30 pm**

**Zoom**



# Agenda



- 1. Oath, Welcome, and Introductions**
- 2. Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Overview**
- 3. Office of the Veteran Advocate Overview**
- 4. Committee's Charge and Background on the Statute**
- 5. Process to Find Qualified Candidates**
- 6. Committee Webpage and Mailbox**
- 7. Next Steps**



# Committee Members



Name	Seat / Affiliation
<b>Daniel Shark (<i>chair</i>)</b>	Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) ( <i>Designee of EOHHS Acting Secretary Beckman</i> )
<b>Gerard J. Cassidy</b>	Massachusetts State Representative Co-chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs (VFA)
<b>Brooke Doyle</b>	Commissioner, Department of Mental Health
<b>Jeffrey Farnsworth</b>	Senior Policy Advisor, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) ( <i>Designee of EOPSS Secretary Reidy</i> )
<b>James C. Fratolillo</b>	Member, American Legion
<b>Gary W. Keefe</b>	Adjutant General, Massachusetts National Guard Chair, Board of Trustees of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home
<b>Bill LeBeau</b>	Department Adjutant, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
<b>Tom Lyons</b>	Chair, Board of Trustees of the Chelsea Soldiers' Home
<b>Cheryl Poppe</b>	Secretary, Department of Veterans' Services (DVS)
<b>John Velis</b>	Massachusetts State Senator Co-chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs (VFA)



# Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Overview



## **Lauren Cleary**

Associate General Counsel

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

## **David Giannotti**

Chief of the Public Education and Communications Division

State Ethics Commission



# Office of the Veteran Advocate



Established by the enactment of Chapter 144 of the Acts of 2022, the **Office of the Veteran Advocate (OVA)** will be a quasi-state agency to primarily ensure veterans in the care of the Commonwealth are receiving timely, safe, humane, and effective services, responsible for:

- Aiding and coordinating with local veterans' services officers to ensure veterans receive all available state and federal benefits;
- Examining on a system-wide basis the care and services executive agencies provide to veterans;
- Advising the public and state government on improvements of services;
- Developing internal procedures for the office's performance;
- Acting as a liaison to state and federal agencies providing services to veterans;
- Assisting executive agencies in developing procedures to best serve the veteran community;
- Investigating incidents where a veteran suffered a fatality, near fatality or serious bodily or emotional injury while receiving services from executive agency; and
- Reporting annually on the delivery of services to the veterans in the Commonwealth, and any recommendations.

**The Veteran Advocate** will be the administrative head of this office.



# Committee's Charge



**Legal Authority:** Chapter 144 of the Acts of 2022

**Full text of the Legislation:** <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter144>

## Summary:

The veteran advocate shall be appointed by a majority vote of the attorney general, the state auditor and the governor from **a list of 3 nominees submitted by a nominating committee to recommend a veteran advocate.**

The nominating committee shall consist of: the secretary of health and human services, or a designee, who shall serve as chair; the secretary of veterans' services, or a designee; the secretary of public safety, or a designee; the commissioner of mental health, or a designee; the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs; the adjutant general of the Massachusetts national guard; a representative of the veterans of foreign wars department of Massachusetts; a representative of the American legion department of Massachusetts; the chair of the board of trustees of the veterans' home in the city of Chelsea; and the chair of the board of trustees of the veterans' home in the city of Holyoke. **The nominating committee shall submit salary recommendations for the candidates commensurate with the candidates' experience and other similar state positions.** The work of the nominating committee shall be coordinated by the executive office of health and human services.

Any person appointed to the position of veteran advocate shall be selected without regard to political affiliation and on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in veteran welfare, justice, auditing, law, health care, management analysis, public administration and investigation or criminal justice administration. The veteran advocate may, subject to appropriation, appoint such other personnel as the veteran advocate deems necessary for the efficient management of the office.



# Process to Find Qualified Candidates



## Processes to Find Candidates

1. Posting a job description on MassCareers
2. Engaging a search firm
3. Committee members seek and recommend candidates for consideration
4. Other suggestions



# Committee Webpage and Mailbox



## **Webpage**

Approved minutes and presentations from Committee meetings will be posted on the Committee's Mass.gov webpage:

<https://www.mass.gov/office-of-the-veteran-advocate-nominating-committee>

## **Mailbox**

General comments and questions may be submitted to the Committee's mailbox (below) or by clicking on the *Contact Us* link on the Mass.gov webpage.

[OVAnominatingcommittee@mass.gov](mailto:OVAnominatingcommittee@mass.gov)



Thank you!