








I Mina'trentai Sais Na Liheslaturan Guåhan  
BILL STATUS

BILL NO.	SPONSOR	TITLE	DATE INTRODUCED	DATE REFERRED	CMTE REFERRED	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE COMMITTEE REPORT FILED	FISCAL NOTES	NOTES
227-36 (COR)	Amanda L. Shelton Telena Cruz Nelson Joe S. San Agustin Jose "Pedro" Terlaje James C. Moylan V. Anthony Ada Tina Rose Muña Barnes	AN ACT TO ADD A NEW ARTICLE 1 TO DIVISION 3 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO ESTABLISHING THE VETERANS BILL OF RIGHTS ACT IN HELPING VETERANS ACCESS HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND HEALTHCARE, THROUGH VARIOUS LOCAL AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS; TO APPROPRIATE FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$500,000) FROM THE 2021 EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT REIMBURSEMENT TO THE GUAM VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE TO IMPLEMENT THE SAME; AND TO CITE THIS ACT AS THE "SECURING AND ENSURING THE RIGHTS VETERANS EARNED (SERVE) ACT."	11/30/21 6:13 p.m.						

***I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN***  
**2021 (FIRST) Regular Session**

**Bill No. 227-36 (COR)**

Introduced by:

Amanda L. Shelton   
Telena Cruz Nelson   
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James C. Moylan   
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**AN ACT TO *ADD* A NEW ARTICLE 1 TO DIVISION 3 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO ESTABLISHING THE VETERANS BILL OF RIGHTS ACT IN HELPING VETERANS ACCESS HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND HEALTHCARE, THROUGH VARIOUS LOCAL AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS; TO APPROPRIATE FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$500,000) FROM THE 2021 EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT REIMBURSEMENT TO THE GUAM VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE TO IMPLEMENT THE SAME; AND TO CITE THIS ACT AS THE "*SECURING AND ENSURING THE RIGHTS VETERANS EARNED (SERVE) ACT.*"**

1 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:**

2 **Section 1. Legislative Finding and Intent.** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*  
3 acknowledges the sacrifices that our men and women have made during their  
4 military service to protect the Nation and territories, when government services to  
5 Veterans are available. However, these services are not widely known throughout

1 the *Guåhan* community. Furthermore, the landscape of Veteran Services is  
2 ambiguous and exhaustive for stakeholders to navigate.

3 *I Liheslatura* further finds that the availability and government assistance for  
4 Veterans to avail in government programs is unreasonably delayed and rigorous. *I*  
5 *Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds that the men and women who dutifully served in the arms  
6 services are entitled to local and federal benefits as Veterans.

7 *I Liheslatura* further finds that Veteran rights and benefits must be acted on  
8 in a timely manner by the government agencies who facilitate and administer these  
9 programs.

10 Therefore, it is the intent if *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* to establish a Veterans Bill  
11 of Rights in Guam law to advance the livelihoods of veterans in Guam and increase  
12 their access to critical services for housing, employment, education and healthcare.

13 **Section 2.** A new Article 1 is hereby *added* to Division 3 of Chapter 67 of  
14 Title 10, Guam Coded Annotated, to read:

15 **“ARTICLE 1**

16 **SECURING AND ENSURING THE RIGHTS VETERANS EARNED**

17 **(SERVE) ACT**

18 **§ 6701. Short Title.**

19 **§ 6702. Guam Veterans Office as Lead Agency.**

20 **§ 6703. Veterans Bill of Rights.**

21  
22 **§ 6701. Short Title.**

23 This Act shall be cited as the “Securing and Ensuring the Rights  
24 Veterans Earned (SERVE) Act.”

25 **§ 6702. Guam Veterans Affairs Office as Lead Agency.**

26 All references to “Office” in this Act shall mean the Guam Office of  
27 Veterans Affairs, established under 10 GCA Chapter 67, which shall be the

1 agency responsible for implementing the provisions of this Act. In the  
2 development of programs and services under this Act, the Office shall  
3 consider the input of the Veterans Affairs Commission.

4 The Office may apply for, receive, and administer grants, subgrants or  
5 enter into intra-governmental and inter-governmental agreements to provide  
6 services to veterans, as defined pursuant to local or federal laws, regulations,  
7 or guidelines. The Office is authorized to comply with the requirements of  
8 federal grants, subgrants, and intra-governmental and inter-governmental  
9 agreements, to include the provision of services to individuals who may  
10 qualify for such services pursuant to the terms of federal grants, subgrants,  
11 and intra-governmental and inter-governmental agreements.

12 **§ 6703. Veterans Bill of Rights.**

13 (a) Housing Assistance.

14 (1) Increase veterans' access to housing assistance by  
15 streamlining processes through inter-governmental and intra-  
16 governmental partnerships.

17 (A) The Office is hereby directed to target housing  
18 programs and streamline federal and local processes to expedite  
19 and reward applicants through interagency Memoranda of  
20 Understanding or Memoranda of Agreement.

21 (b) Employment Support.

22 (1) Increase veterans' access to jobs by applying smart data to  
23 direct veterans in-demand fields.

24 (A) The Office is hereby directed to create and produce  
25 electronic reports of workforce need projections, by industry, job  
26 type, geography, and needed credentials; including to compare  
27 workforce needs with existing and projected workforce and

1 credential availability; and highlight top in-demand industries,  
2 job types, and credentials.

3 (B) The Office shall include in this report a pathway of  
4 which in-demand job titles and credentials would leverage skills,  
5 experience and credentials possessed by veterans; and forward  
6 the underlying data report and that additional information  
7 monthly to appropriate military outplacement offices, education  
8 centers, non-profit programs, and Government agencies working  
9 to connect veterans with jobs.

10 (c) Higher Learning Opportunities.

11 (1) Award college credit from military training and  
12 experiences

13 (A) Every veteran who enrolls as a student in good  
14 standing at any institution with the local university system and  
15 community college system, shall upon application be granted  
16 academic credits without limitation towards his or her degree for  
17 completion of courses that were part of such veteran's military  
18 training or service if the completed courses meet the standards of  
19 the American Council on Education or its equivalent for the  
20 awarding of academic credits. No fee, tuition, or other charge  
21 shall be assessed against a veteran who qualifies for such credit  
22 pursuant to this section.

23 (B) The Office shall adopt such procedures as necessary  
24 to fully implement the provisions in this section.

25 (2) Increase flexibility in course registration to reflect  
26 returning veterans' needs.

1                   (A) At institutions within the local university system  
2                   and community college system:

3                   (i) Institutions that offer an early course  
4                   registration period for any segment of the student  
5                   population *shall* have a process in place to offer early  
6                   course registration to students who are veterans or national  
7                   guard members.

8                   (ii) A student who is called to active duty in the  
9                   armed forces of the United States after having regularly  
10                  attended a course for thirteen (13) or more weeks or  
11                  having completed eighty-five percent (85%) of the  
12                  course's work for the term through acceleration *shall* be  
13                  given full credit for each course in which he or she has a  
14                  grade of C or better.

15                  (iii) Students called to active duty who does not  
16                  meet attendance requirements sufficient to earn a grade  
17                  *shall* be entitled to a one hundred (100%) refund of tuition  
18                  and fees.

19                  (iv) Veterans with no previous college experience  
20                  *shall* be permitted to file applications up to the end of  
21                  registration and allowed to begin classes pending  
22                  completion of their application and provision of  
23                  supporting documents.

24                  (v) Upon their return from active-duty veterans  
25                  may register even after normal registration periods end,  
26                  without late fees or other penalties.

1                   (3) Leverage veterans’ experiences and expand proven cost-  
2 effective training programs.

3                   (A) The Office shall annually review apprentice,  
4 training, and other vocational programs focused on providing job  
5 training and placement to returning military servicemembers and  
6 veterans. Such annual review shall evaluate the costs and results  
7 recommend programs for expansion with state funding,  
8 including to estimate future returns to the state of improved  
9 outcomes from program expansion.

10                  (B) The Office shall provide an annual report to the  
11 legislature and Governor on January 1 of each year for five (5)  
12 years after the passage of this Act, to be used to inform annual  
13 budget decisions.

14                  (d) Access to Healthcare.

15                  (1) Increase veterans’ access to healthcare through healthcare  
16 coverage and treatment they are eligible for based on their service.

17                  (A) The Office is hereby directed to develop and operate  
18 veteran health navigator services to increase access to healthcare  
19 coverage and services.

20                  (i) The Office shall identify, train, and deploy  
21 veteran health navigators who have direct knowledge of  
22 the veteran communities they serve.

23                  (ii) Veteran health navigators shall help identify  
24 all federal and other health benefits, coverage, and  
25 services available to veterans and their families.

26                  (iii) Veteran health navigators shall coordinate  
27 with relevant departments, healthcare providers, and

1 health insurance programs to help veterans and their  
2 beneficiaries apply for coverage under such programs,  
3 including helping veterans overcome barriers within the  
4 health care system to ensure enrollment in health plans and  
5 effective delivery and coordination of health services.

6 (2) Prevent veteran suicide and increase veterans' access to  
7 mental health services.

8 (A) Ensure veterans and their families have access to  
9 mental health treatment, including for post-traumatic stress  
10 disorder, depression, suicide, and suicidal ideation.

11 (i) Ensure access to mental health coverage,  
12 services, and treatment is included as holistic approach of  
13 the veteran health navigator program described in §  
14 6703(d)(1)(A) as a source of information about the unique  
15 needs, coverage, and treatment gaps faced by veterans and  
16 their families, the Office *shall* examine all existing  
17 programs designed to increase access to affordable quality  
18 healthcare, to evaluate whether the needs of veterans and  
19 their families are met by those programs designed to  
20 increase access to affordable quality healthcare, to  
21 evaluate whether the needs of veterans and their families  
22 are by those programs or whether further coordination  
23 with the veteran health navigators or the steps would better  
24 meet the needs of veterans and their families.

25 (ii) The Office *shall* execute any steps identified  
26 in (i) above and produce a report of its findings,  
27 recommendations and any additional legislative or budget



1                   action it recommends; and shall deliver that report to the  
2                   legislature and Governor and release it to the news media.

3                   (iii) The Office *shall* prepare a report showing the  
4                   impacts of Medicaid expansion have had to date for the  
5                   community of veterans and their families and *shall* include  
6                   any recommendations for better including or serving  
7                   veterans and their families; and *shall* deliver a report to the  
8                   Legislature and Governor and release it to the news  
9                   media.”

10           **Section 3. Appropriation.** The sum of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars  
11   **(\$500,000)** from the revenues received from the earned income tax credit  
12 reimbursement for calendar year 2021 pursuant to Section 7530(b) of U.S. Public  
13 Law 117-2, under the American Rescue Plan Act, is hereby appropriated to the  
14 Guam Veterans Affairs Office for its operations and implementation of programs  
15 and services under this Act, for Fiscal Year 2022. This appropriation shall be  
16 available until fully expended.

17           **Section 4. Implementation.** The Guam Office of Veterans Affairs shall  
18 have one (1) year from the effective date of this Act to implement programs and  
19 services, and any other mandates under the Veterans Bill of Rights as established by  
20 this Act.

21           **Section 5. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or its application to any  
22 person or circumstance is found to be invalid or contrary to law, such invalidity *shall*  
23 *not* affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without  
24 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Act are  
25 severable.

26           **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act *shall* become effective upon enactment.