

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No:	SB0146 PN0131	Prepared By:	Michael Hillman
Committee:	Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness	Executive Director:	717-783-4069, x6426
Sponsor:	Baker, Lisa		Michael Hillman
Date:	10/6/2025		

A. Brief Concept

Creates the Veterans' Trust Fund Board to strengthen oversight of the VTF grant program.

C. Analysis of the Bill

This bill amends [Title 51 \(Military Affairs\)](#), [Section 1721 \(Veterans' Trust Fund\)](#) of the [Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes](#) to create the Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF) Board as an advisory board within the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA). The Board would work to increase donations to the VTF and ensure its effective and impactful management, including by advising DMVA on appropriate funding priorities, reviewing grant applications, raising public awareness of the VTF, recommending performance audit metrics for disbursed grants and legislative or policy changes to enhance the VTF, and reviewing audits and reports with DMVA and legislative leaders.

Members of the Board will be veterans, family members of veterans, and individuals who have extensive experience serving veterans. In selecting Board members, an emphasis is to be placed on subject matter experts in veterans issues including behavioral health, mental health, post-traumatic stress, physical disabilities, housing, and other social determinants of health. The Board is to be comprised of 12 members:

- Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans' Affairs or a designee, serving ex officio;
- Two members recommended by the Adjutant General (TAG) and appointed by the Governor;
- Two members of the Pennsylvania State Veterans' Commission (PSVC) recommended by the chairperson of the PSVC and appointed by the Governor;
- Seven members recommended by TAG and appointed by the Governor, including:
 - One from the City of Philadelphia;
 - One from the City of Pittsburgh;
 - One each from [the five PA VETConnect Program regions](#).

Each member will serve a four-year term except for initial terms, which are staggered to create new appointments each year. The bill provides for removal and replacement of inactive members, organization of the Board, payment of expenses, quorum, additional membership restrictions, and conflict of interest procedures.

The bill requires a performance audit of the VTF every second year, beginning July 31, 2026, to be submitted by DMVA to the chairpersons of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Effective Date:

60 days.

G. Relevant Existing Laws

[Title 51 \(Military Affairs\)](#) is the Military and Veterans Code in the Commonwealth. Veterans' programs are scattered throughout Title 51 and not consolidated in a single part or chapter.

[Chapter 17 \(State Veterans' Commission and Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans' Affairs\)](#) is structured to be the primary chapter dealing with the offices and entities that oversee and provide veterans' benefits, as well as the benefit programs themselves; however, some programs are contained in other chapters.

[Subchapter C \(Funds\)](#) establishes guidelines for the Veterans' Trust Fund. The Veterans Trust Fund receives funds from voluntary contributions and proceeds from special veterans' license plates paid to the Department of Transportation; fines collected for stolen valor and misrepresentation of military service; grants; gifts; donations; and appropriations; the DMVA may solicit and accept gifts and donations. The DMVA must adopt a policy statement for the use of the fund and publish the statement in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. The DMVA must submit an annual report on the fund to the majority and minority chairpersons of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committees.

[Section 1721 \(Veterans' Trust Fund\)](#) establishes the Veterans' Trust Fund and how money is appropriated to it. The Veterans' Trust Fund receives funding from:

- Voluntary \$3 donations from people applying for or renewing their Pennsylvania driver's license or photo ID and renewing motor vehicle registrations.
- Proceeds from the sale of the Honoring Our Veterans standard and motorcycle license plate.
- Proceeds from the sale of the Honoring Our Women Veterans standard license plate.
- Fines collected from stolen valor charges under [18 Pa.C.S. § 6701](#).
- Grants, gifts, and donations from a person, business, or governmental entity.
- Money appropriated to the fund by the General Assembly.
- A one-time transfer of \$1.7 million from the 2013 sale of the former Scotland School for Veterans Children.

DMVA is authorized to spend money from the Veterans' Trust Fund for the following purposes:

- Grants to veterans' service organizations and other charitable organizations for programs or projects that support veterans and their families.
- Grants or funding for new, innovative, and expanded programs operated by a county director of veterans' affairs or the State Association of County Directors of Veterans Affairs.
- Assistance with shelter and necessities of living for veterans when veterans' temporary assistance funding is not available.
- Payments to the Motor License Fund for costs incurred by the Department of Transportation for implementation.
- No more than 10% of the balance in the fund may be used for DMVA-sponsored training and informational programs for veterans.

E. [Prior Session](#) (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

[Senate Bill 531 of 2023-24 \(Baker\)](#) was reported as committed by [a party-line vote \(7-4\)](#) from the Senate VA&EP Committee and [a party-line vote](#) (14-9, Aument not voting) from the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill was amended on the floor by [a 35-10 vote](#) (10 Dems voted no, 5 Dems did not vote), and passed the Senate by [a vote of 28-20](#) (27 Rs and Flynn voted yes, 20 Ds voted no, Aument and A. Williams did not vote). The bill was subsequently [amended by](#) and [reported as amended from](#) the House VA&EP Committee by a vote of 17-8 (Mako, Rigby, C. Williams joining Ds). **Note: Senate Bill 146 PN 131 of 2025-26 is substantially similar to the House-amended version from 2023-24.**

[Senate Bill 1169 of 2021-22 \(Baker\)](#) was referred to the Senate VA&EP Committee, where it received no further consideration.

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