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THE WHOOTIE WHO NEWS
Department Of Missouri Legislative
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Missouri Veterans Need Help Edition

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Missouri Veterans Homes are the Best in Class But are Turning Veterans Away!

Missouri has the **Best-in-class Veterans Homes** and Veterans Cemeteries, but our Veterans Homes are turning Veterans away because they do not have enough staff to run a full capacity. **Missouri Veterans Homes are currently at 54% capacity due to staffing issues!** If we are only ½ capacity in Veteran's Homes, we are **losing approximately \$40 million from federal revenue!** The Fiscal Year of 2023 was challenging regarding healthcare employment because outside entities are offering healthcare sign on bonuses of anywhere between \$2500 to \$10,000. Unfortunately for Fiscal Year 2024 we will require \$60 million to meet our operating expenses for the Missouri Veterans Commission. **Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations (MAVO)** is encouraging us to encourage our representatives to **pass HJR 12**. Which proposes a constitutional amendment dividing state revenues from gaming activities between public institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education and the administration of the **Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC)**. The **MVC** manages the operation and maintenance of State Veterans Homes, State Veterans Cemeteries, Veterans Service Officers Program, Veterans Grant Program, and other veterans' needs. For example, last year six of the state's seven nursing homes for veterans stopped admitting new residents because of an ongoing staffing shortage linked to unreasonably low pay rates. In one category of nurses, the turnover rate was over 100%.

This situation forced the (MVC) to request additional funding, stating that without supplemental funds, the continued operation of the homes was "at risk". MVC funding comes from three major sources the Dept of Veteran Affairs, Missouri Gaming Commission and the Missouri Veterans Health and Care Fund. Tying the MVC funding to gaming was a well-intentioned budget gimmick. However, declining revenues from gaming is the primary cause of the shortage of qualified personnel at the Veterans Homes, which led to empty beds at the state Veterans Homes, resulting in reduced reimbursement for the VA. Bottom line, Instability in these revenues makes long term budgetary planning problematic and often increases operating expenses.

Priority Goals for 2023

The new Priority Goals are outlined at <https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service> The **National VFW** has **endorsed new bills** and you will be able to see the bills in the Action Center at <https://voterveice.net/VFW/bills> The first one of the year is on the site, check this site often for updates. **S.42 - BUILD for Veterans Act of 2023** is a bill to improve the management and performance of the capital asset programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs to better serve veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors, and for other purposes.

Online Reporting for Legislative

Have you submitted an online report? If not and you are mailing a year-end report instead of reporting activities online, please send them in now! Please don't wait! If I can Help you report, please call me we can do it together.