



## Key Message

The unique needs of military families may go unheard without representation on state-level advisory bodies focused on the defense community. States can establish statewide military defense-focused councils that consider military family readiness and dedicate one or more seats to members of the military community.

## Analysis

State boards and councils can be established by executive order of the governor or by state law. A statewide military affairs-focused board serves as a central point of contact and resource for state policymakers on issues impacting military installations, the National Guard, military families and overall military readiness.

This approach aims to consolidate efforts and provide a more unified voice on matters of importance to the military community. To ensure comprehensive representation and effectiveness, these statewide defense-focused boards should be:

- **Statewide scope:** The board should operate at the statewide level
- **Military affairs relevance:** The board should be directly related to military affairs.
- **Dedicated military representation:** The board should include one or more dedicated seats for someone in the military community. This could include a current service member, a military spouse, or someone with demonstrable expertise or experience in the military lifestyle.
- **Family readiness focus:** The board's agenda should explicitly address issues pertinent to military family readiness. This includes, but is not limited to, child care, education, housing and employment opportunities.

## Best Practices

### 1. EXAMPLES:

#### Nebraska Revised Statute, Chapter 55, Section 601

<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-601>

#### **"Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs; created; members; terms; vacancy.**

(1) The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs is created. The commission shall consist of the following voting members:

- (a) The Director of Economic Development;
- (b) The Adjutant General or his or her designee;
- (c) The Director of Veterans' Affairs; and
- (d) Three residents of the State of Nebraska, one from each congressional district. At least one of the three residents shall have current or prior military experience and at least one shall have a background in business.



- (2) The commission shall have the following nonvoting, ex officio members:
- (a) The veterans' program coordinator of the Department of Labor;
  - (b) The chair of the State Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve;
  - (c) The commander of the 55th Wing of the Air Combat Command or his or her designee;
  - (d) The commander of the United States Strategic Command or his or her designee; and
  - (e) The commander of the 557th Weather Wing of the United States Air Force or his or her designee. [...]"

**Nebraska Revised Statute, Chapter 55, Section 602**

<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-602>

**"Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs; powers and duties.**

[...] Additionally, the commission shall:

- (1) Address matters of military significance to Nebraska;
- (2) Maintain a cooperative and constructive relationship between state agencies and the military and veteran entities in Nebraska as necessary to ensure coordination and implementation of unified and comprehensive statewide strategies involved with, or affected by, the military; [...]
- (5) Promote and optimize state and United States Department of Defense initiatives that will improve the military value of the Nebraska National Guard, active and reserve military force structure and installations, and the quality of life for military personnel residing in Nebraska; [...]
- (10) Identify and support ways to provide sound infrastructure, adequate housing, education, and transition support into Nebraska's workforce for military members and their families, retired military personnel, and veterans."

**Nebraska Revised Statute, Chapter 55, Section 605**

<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=55-605>

**"Military affairs liaison; duties.**

- (1) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall hire a military affairs liaison for the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs [...] The liaison shall have military experience [...]"

**Utah Code, Title 36, Chapter 28, Section 102**

<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title36/Chapter28/36-28-S102.html>

**"Veterans and Military Affairs Commission [...]"**

- (1) There is created the Veterans and Military Affairs Commission.
- (2) The commission membership is composed of 18 permanent members, but may not exceed 23 members, and is as follows:
  - (a) five legislative members to be appointed as follows:
    - (i) three members from the House of Representatives, whom the speaker of the House of Representatives appoints, no more than two of whom may be from the same political party; and
    - (ii) two members from the Senate, whom the president of the Senate appoints, no more than one of whom may be from the same political party;



- (b) the executive director of the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs or the director's designee;
- (c) the chair of the Utah Veterans Advisory Council;
- (d) the executive director of the Department of Workforce Services or the director's designee;
- (e) the executive director of the Department of Health and Human Services or the director's designee;
- (f) the adjutant general of the Utah National Guard or the adjutant general's designee;
- (g) the Guard and Reserve Transition Assistance Advisor;
- (h) a designee of the Utah Board of Higher Education, whom the commissioner of higher education selects, under the direction of the board;
- (i) three representatives of veteran service organizations whom the Veterans Advisory Council recommends and the commission confirms;
- (j) one member of the Executive Committee of the Utah Defense Alliance;
- (k) one military affairs representative from a chamber of commerce member, the Utah State Chamber of Commerce appoints; and
- (l) a representative from the Veterans Health Administration."

**Utah Code, Title 36, Chapter 28, Section 103**

<https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title36/Chapter28/36-28-S103.html>

"The commission shall:

- (1) comply with the rules of legislative interim committees;
- (2) study and make recommendations to the Legislature on the following issues as they impact active duty servicemembers, veterans, and their dependents:
  - (a) reintegration from military to civilian status;
  - (b) employment;
  - (c) finances;
  - (d) education;
  - (e) health and mental health, including suicide prevention;
  - (f) military affairs, including the impact of military bases; and
  - (g) coordination of state and local government resources to assist active duty servicemembers, veterans, and their dependents; and
- (3) consider the unique role of the Utah National Guard and its servicemembers in regard to the issues in Subsection (2)."

**North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 143B, Article 14**

[https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByArticle/Chapter\\_143B/Article\\_14.html](https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByArticle/Chapter_143B/Article_14.html)

**"§ 143B-1310.1. Strategic plan.**

- (a) Strategic Plan. - The Military Affairs Commission shall adopt a comprehensive strategic plan to enhance North Carolina military installations and their missions. The strategic plan shall include specific objectives related to the following topics:
  - (1) Supporting and enhancing existing military installations and missions.



- (2) Attracting new military assets and missions to North Carolina.
- (3) Expanding military-related economic development in North Carolina.
- (4) Improving the quality of life for military members and their families, military retirees, and veterans.
- (5) Advocating military-related issues to the General Assembly, the United States Congress, and State and federal agencies [...]

#### § 143B-1311. Membership.

- (a) The North Carolina Military Affairs Commission shall consist of 23 voting members who are appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, nonvoting members, and nonvoting ex officio members as designated in this section.
- (b) The voting members of the Commission shall be appointed as follows:
  - (1) Thirteen members appointed by the Governor, consisting of:
    - a. One person residing near Camp Lejeune, who is retired from the military and is actively involved in a military affairs organization, or a person who is involved in military issues through civic, commercial, or governmental relationships.
    - b. One person residing near Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, who is retired from the military and is actively involved in a military affairs organization, or a person who is involved in military issues through civic, commercial, or governmental relationships.
    - c. One person residing near Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, who is retired from the military and is actively involved in a military affairs organization, or a person who is involved in military issues through civic, commercial, or governmental relationships.
    - d. One person residing near Ft. Bragg, who is retired from the military and is actively involved in a military affairs organization, or a person who is involved in military issues through civic, commercial, or governmental relationships.
    - e. One person residing near Coast Guard Station Elizabeth City, who is retired from the military and is actively involved in a military affairs organization, or a person who is involved in military issues through civic, commercial, or governmental relationships.
    - f. Six persons who may reside in any part of the State, who are involved in military issues through civic, commercial, or governmental relationships.
    - g. One person who is a resident of North Carolina with a long-term connection to the State and who is a current or retired member of the North Carolina National Guard involved in a military affairs organization or involved in military issues through civil, commercial, or governmental relationships.
    - h. One person who is a resident of North Carolina with a long-term connection to the State and who is a current or retired member of a reserve component of the Air Force, Army, Navy, or Marines and who is involved in a military affairs organization or involved in military issues through civic, commercial, or governmental relationships."