

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 8946

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Affairs History Office, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 20, 2026

Mr. TURNER of Ohio (for himself and Mr. LANDSMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Affairs History Office, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Affairs Herit-
5 age Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) On January 19, 2017, Secretary of Vet-
9 erans Affairs Robert A. McDonald signed a Memo-
10 randum of Agreement that established goals for the

1 Department of Veterans Affairs and regional leaders
2 of Dayton, Ohio, to advance a history office as a
3 community partnership.

4 (2) A report commissioned by the Department
5 determined that, “a central History Office, properly
6 staffed and resourced, can become an essential ally
7 for the Department’s senior staff at Headquarters
8 and in the field.”.

9 (3) The establishment of a History Office in the
10 Department pursuant to an executive memorandum
11 of the Department, dated April 10, 2020, is a vital
12 contribution to honoring veterans and improving the
13 understanding of how they served the United States.

14 (4) Department of Veterans Affairs Directive
15 7777, titled “Implementation of the VA History
16 Program”, was issued on February 9, 2021, and es-
17 tablished the policies, responsibilities, and manage-
18 ment directions for the Department of Veterans Af-
19 fairs History Program.

20 (5) The centennial year of the Department is
21 2030 and such year is a goal for establishing a ro-
22 bust program of ongoing history outreach activities
23 and permanent public exhibits telling the story of
24 the Department.

1 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
2 **AFFAIRS HISTORY OFFICE.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 38, United
4 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
5 lowing new section:

6 **“§ 325. History Office**

7 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established within
9 the Department an office comprising a history pro-
10 gram and a national history center.

11 “(2) DESIGNATION.—The office established
12 under paragraph (1) shall be known as the ‘Depart-
13 ment of Veterans Affairs History Office’ (in this sec-
14 tion referred to as the ‘Office’).

15 “(3) LOCATION.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall be lo-
17 cated in Dayton, Ohio, at a facility of the De-
18 partment that the Secretary determines appro-
19 priate.

20 “(B) SUNSET.—The requirement under
21 subparagraph (A) shall terminate on the date
22 that is eight years after the date of the enact-
23 ment of this section.

24 “(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Office shall
25 be—

1 “(1) to collect, preserve, and provide access to
2 relevant historical records, artifacts, and cultural re-
3 sources of the Department (and any predecessor or-
4 ganization); and

5 “(2) to tell a comprehensive story of the De-
6 partment (and any predecessor organization) to vet-
7 erans, government agencies, and the public.

8 “(c) OFFICE COMPOSITION.—

9 “(1) CHIEF HISTORIAN.—The head of the Of-
10 fice shall be the Chief Historian of the Department
11 (in this section referred to as the ‘Chief Historian’),
12 who shall report directly to the Secretary.

13 “(2) ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF.—The Office may
14 be comprised of such other professional and adminis-
15 trative staff as the Secretary determines necessary
16 for the Office to fulfill the responsibilities described
17 in subsection (d), consistent with the purposes speci-
18 fied in subsection (b).

19 “(d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Office shall be respon-
20 sible for—

21 “(1) carrying out—

22 “(A) the activities set forth in VA Direc-
23 tive 7777, relating to implementation of a De-
24 partment history program, and dated February
25 9, 2021, or any successor directive; and

1 “(B) public activities and educational op-
2 portunities, including print and web-based pub-
3 lications and exhibits, and virtual augmented
4 reality technologies that increase awareness of
5 the contributions of the Department in sup-
6 porting veterans;

7 “(2) constructing, renovating, repairing, oper-
8 ating, and maintaining new or existing Department
9 facilities used for—

10 “(A) preservation, restoration, and public
11 access to Department historic materials, ar-
12 chives, and artifacts;

13 “(B) training with respect to the preserva-
14 tion of historic materials, archives, and arti-
15 facts; or

16 “(C) education relating to the history of
17 the Department and its predecessor organiza-
18 tions;

19 “(3) maintaining facilities for access to, and
20 storage of, historic materials, artifacts, and archives,
21 compliant with recognized specifications for such fa-
22 cilities, including—

23 “(A) storage facilities;

24 “(B) conference facilities; and

25 “(C) public exhibit space; and

1 “(4) conducting education and training on the
2 preservation of historical materials, archival manage-
3 ment, digitization, restoration, historical research,
4 and related subjects to assist the Department.

5 “(e) INTERNAL COORDINATION GROUP.—

6 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

7 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180
8 days after the date of the enactment of this sec-
9 tion, the Secretary shall—

10 “(i) establish an internal coordination
11 group (in this subsection the ‘Group’) to
12 assist the Office in fulfilling the respon-
13 sibilities described in subsection (d), con-
14 sistent with the purposes specified in sub-
15 section (b); and

16 “(ii) issue, in regulations, a charter
17 that includes requirements for the adminis-
18 tration and operation of the Group.

19 “(B) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Group shall
20 be responsible for advising the Office on mat-
21 ters relating to operations of the Office, includ-
22 ing such matters relating to the provisions of
23 continuity and resourcing for the development
24 of the history program or the national history
25 center described in subsection (a).

1 “(C) OPERATION.—The Group shall oper-
2 ate in accordance with—

3 “(i) the charter issued pursuant to
4 subparagraph (A); and

5 “(ii) such other procedures relating to
6 the administration and operation of the
7 Group as the Secretary determines appro-
8 priate.

9 “(2) GROUP MEMBERS.—The Group shall be
10 comprised of the following:

11 “(A) The Deputy Secretary of Veterans
12 Affairs.

13 “(B) The Assistant Secretary for Manage-
14 ment and Chief Financial Officer, or designee.

15 “(C) The Chief Historian.

16 “(D) A senior employee selected by the
17 Secretary from each of the following:

18 “(i) The Veterans Experience Office.

19 “(ii) The Office of Congressional and
20 Legislative Affairs.

21 “(iii) The Office of Acquisition Logis-
22 tics and Construction.

23 “(iv) The Office of the General Coun-
24 sel.

1 “(v) The Veterans Health Administra-
2 tion.

3 “(vi) The Veterans Benefits Adminis-
4 tration.

5 “(vii) The National Cemetery Admin-
6 istration.

7 “(E) Such other officers and employees of
8 the Department as the Secretary considers ap-
9 propriate.

10 “(3) CHAIR.—The chair of the Group shall be
11 the Deputy Secretary.

12 “(f) TRANSFER OF CERTAIN FUNCTIONS.—

13 “(1) VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM; VETERANS
14 LEGACY MEMORIAL.—The functions relating to the
15 administration of the Veterans Legacy Program and
16 the Veterans Legacy Memorial which, on the day be-
17 fore the date of the enactment of this section, were
18 performed by the National Cemetery Administration,
19 are hereby transferred to the Office. Any efforts
20 with respect to the administration of the Veterans
21 Legacy Program and the Veterans Legacy Memorial
22 beginning on or after such date shall be carried out
23 by the Office.

24 “(2) VETERANS’ HISTORY PROJECT.—The func-
25 tions relating to the administration of the oral his-

1 tory program required under section 3 of the Vet-
2 erans' Oral History Project Act (Public Law 106-
3 380; 20 U.S.C. 2142) which, on the day before the
4 date of the enactment of this Act, were performed
5 by the Director of the American Folklife Center at
6 the Library of Congress, are hereby transferred to
7 the Office. Any efforts with respect to the adminis-
8 tration of the such oral history program beginning
9 on or after such date shall be carried out by the Of-
10 fice.

11 “(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
12 this subsection may be construed to require func-
13 tions relating to the administration of the National
14 Archives Veterans Oral History project to be trans-
15 ferred to the Office.

16 “(g) GIFTS AND BEQUESTS.—

17 “(1) AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT.—The Secretary
18 may accept, hold, administer, and spend any gift,
19 devise, or bequest of real property, personal prop-
20 erty, or money made on the condition that the gift,
21 devise, or bequest be used for the benefit, or in con-
22 nection with, the purposes and activities of the Of-
23 fice, including a gift, devise, or bequest of an im-
24 provement made pursuant to subsection (f)(3).

1 “(2) DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY.—The Sec-
2 retary may authorize the sale of donated property
3 received under paragraph (1). A sale under this
4 paragraph need not be conducted in accordance with
5 disposal requirements that would otherwise apply, so
6 long as the sale is conducted at arms-length and in-
7 cludes an auditable transaction record.

8 “(3) USE OF MONEY AND PROCEEDS.—Any
9 money received under paragraph (1) and any pro-
10 ceeds from the sale of property under paragraph (2)
11 shall be deposited into a fund established in the
12 Treasury to support the purposes and activities of
13 the Office.

14 “(h) PARTNERSHIPS, COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS,
15 AND LEASE AUTHORITY.—

16 “(1) PARTNERSHIPS.—The Secretary may enter
17 into a partnership or cooperative agreement with an
18 organization to support the Office in fulfilling the
19 responsibilities under subsection (d).

20 “(2) LEASE AUTHORITY.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
22 lease portions of any real property or facility of
23 the Office to a nonprofit organization for use in
24 generating revenue for the support of activities
25 of the Office and for such administrative pur-

1 poses as may be necessary for support of the
2 Office.

3 “(B) RENT.—Any rent received by the
4 Secretary under a lease under subparagraph
5 (A), including rent-in-kind, shall be used solely
6 to cover or defray the costs of fulfilling the re-
7 sponsibilities under subsection (d).

8 “(3) IMPROVEMENTS.—The Secretary may per-
9 mit a nonprofit organization to make improvements
10 to real property or a facility of the Office for the
11 construction of a multipurpose facility to be used for
12 historical displays for public viewing, curation, and
13 storage of artifacts, research facilities, classrooms,
14 offices, and associated activities consistent with the
15 mission of the Office.

16 “(i) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
17 tion may be construed as affecting the authority of the
18 Archivist of the United States with respect to the manage-
19 ment of permanent records of the Department.

20 “(j) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION DEFINED.—In this
21 section, the term ‘nonprofit organization means’ an orga-
22 nization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal
23 Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under
24 section 501(a) of that Code.”.

1 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
2 at the beginning of chapter 3 of such title is amended by
3 adding at the end the following new item:

“325. History Office.”.

4 **SEC. 4. REPORTS.**

5 (a) LONG RANGE PLANNING.—Not later than 180
6 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
7 retary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees
8 on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Rep-
9 resentatives a report on proposed activities of the Depart-
10 ment of Veterans Affairs History Office established pursu-
11 ant to section 325(a) of title 38, United States Code, as
12 added by section 3.

13 (b) CONTENTS.—Such report shall include plans for
14 the following:

15 (1) Staffing and budget.

16 (2) Organizational charts pertaining to the cur-
17 rent staff and location of the History Office within
18 the Department of Veterans Affairs.

19 (3) Construction and renovation of facilities
20 supporting the History Office, including the Na-
21 tional Department of Veterans Affairs History Cen-
22 ter.

23 (4) Such recommendations for legislative or ad-
24 ministrative action as the Secretary determines ap-
25 propriate with respect to the History Office.

1 (c) ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS.—Not later than
2 one year after the date on which the Secretary submits
3 the report required by subsection (a), and not less fre-
4 quently than annually thereafter until December 31, 2030,
5 the Chief Historian of the Department of Veterans Affairs
6 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of
7 the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on
8 the progress of the History Office.

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