

## CHAPTER 57

**AN ACT** concerning services by county veterans' affairs offices to Gold Star families and amending P.L.2010, c.11.

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 1 of P.L.2010, c.11 (C.38A:3-28.1) is amended to read as follows:

C.38A:3-28.1 Provision of certain information to surviving beneficiary of deceased service member.

1. a. (1) Upon receipt of the notice from the United States Department of Defense of the death of a service member who resided in this State and whose surviving beneficiary resides in this State, the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs shall notify, no later than ten working days, the appropriate county veterans' affairs office, or county designee, and the appropriate State veterans service office. The State office shall provide the surviving beneficiary of a deceased service member with a comprehensive packet containing information on all federal and State benefits for which the surviving beneficiary may be eligible. The department shall develop the packet and provide all State veterans service offices with a supply of packets for distribution.

This section shall also apply when a deceased service member is not a resident of this State, but whose surviving beneficiary is a resident of this State, if that information is known.

(2) Every county veterans' affairs office shall have a designated Gold Star family member liaison. The liaison may be a volunteer or a Gold Star family member. The liaison shall, in conjunction with the State veterans' service offices, assist Gold Star families to access the services they are entitled to by providing information on State benefits, Gold Star family organizations, and such other resources deemed necessary and beneficial to a Gold Star family member.

- b. For the purpose of this section:

"Child" means the individual who is a son or daughter by birth or adoption.

"Deceased service member" means any member of the Armed Forces of the United States or a Reserve component thereof or a member of the National Guard who dies as a result of enemy action, accident or disease while on federal active duty, including active duty for training.

"Gold Star family member" means the spouse, domestic partner, partner in a civil union, parent, brother, sister, child, legal guardian, or other legal custodian, whether of the whole or half blood, or by adoption.

"Parent" means the individual who is a father or mother by birth or adoption.

"Spouse" means the individual to whom the deceased service member was legally married at the time of the member's death.

"Surviving beneficiary" means the spouse, child or parent of a deceased service member who resides in this State.

2. This act shall take effect on the 60th day next following enactment, except that the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs and county veterans' affairs offices may take any anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

Approved May 1, 2017.