



Illinois State Association of Counties

September 22, 2022

Mr. Steve Walsh
Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs
Office of the Illinois Attorney General
100 W. Randolph St., Floor 13
Chicago, IL 60601

Mr. Walsh,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and submit comments on the Veterans Assistance Commission (VAC) trailer bill draft.

I would also like to extend appreciation for the draft's inclusion of select provisions offered by the Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo). These include the following:

- requiring that a copy of the annual transaction report be provided to the President or Chairperson of the County Board (page 10);
- requiring VACs to adopt all policies already established and in place that include, but are not limited to, policies related to compensation and employee rights. This reflects the spirit of a provision submitted by ISACo (page 13); and
- requiring VACs to undergo an annual financial audit that would be provided to the President or Chairperson of the County Board (page 13).

There remain issues within the draft that ISACo would like to see addressed. They are as follows:

PTELL EXEMPTION CLARIFICATION

A draft prepared by ISACo and provided to you on September 9 included additional language to ensure that the tax levied by County Boards to fund VACs was exempt from the tax caps under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL). As explained to ISACo, this exemption was always the intended policy.

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The trailer bill draft prepared by the Attorney General's Office does not include this additional language. On this very important matter, ISACo respectfully requests that either the additional language be included in the final draft or that the Attorney General issue a formal opinion indicating that the tax levy is exempt from PTELL if that is indeed the intent.

FUNDING ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

ISACo's draft also included language eliminating the requirement for counties to provide for furnishings, supplies and services that are administrative in nature. The reason for this is because VAC budgets would have sufficient revenue to fund these needs per the funding provisions enacted within P.A. 102-0732. ISACo requests the inclusion of our proposed language regarding this provision.

COUNTY BOARD OVERSIGHT

As mentioned in my September 9 communication, ISACo maintains a significant concern that elected County Boards are being mandated to approve funding to a county agency, but have had their oversight role stripped away. Budgetary oversight is a basic function of elected boards and removing this essential oversight role disempowers the ability of constituents to potentially influence taxation and spending specific to a function of county government.

This disconnect can be resolved by either reinstating an oversight role for County Boards or by officially designating VACs as separate units of local government with boards elected by the public and invested with the power of taxation.

Once again, thank you for extending the opportunity to comment on the draft language prepared by the Office of the Attorney General. Please feel welcome to contact me at 217/679-3368 or jmccov@isacoil.org if I can answer any questions or otherwise be of service.

Respectfully,



Joe McCoy
Executive Director
Illinois State Association of Counties

Cc: The Honorable Stephanie Kifowit, State Representative
The Honorable Daniel Swanson, State Representative
The Honorable Daniel Didech, State Representative
The Honorable Sam Yingling, State Representative
The Honorable Camille Lily, State Representative
The Honorable Craig Wilcox, State Senator
The Honorable Antonio Munoz, State Senator
The Honorable Jason Plummer, State Senator
The Honorable Michael Hastings, State Senator