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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's June Column – New Laws Impacting Veterans**

Each year South Dakota agencies, legislators, constituents, and lobbyists review, debate, and consider hundreds of legislative issues. During the 2019 legislative session 1,589 legislative bills and resolutions were introduced. Although, over 1,500 bills were considered, not all became law.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs serves as an advocate for veterans and reviews all the bills introduced and identifies those that will impact our veterans.

State legislation that will impact veterans and their families after July 1 include the following:

- Exemptions from the twelve-month residency requirement for university students was modified to be in compliance with federal regulations. Simply put, this was a cleanup bill and does not change eligibility.
- Property tax exemption was increased from \$100,000 to \$150,000 of the full and true value of a dwelling that is owned and occupied by a veteran who is rated permanently and totally disabled from a service connected disability(ies).
- Annual certification is no longer required for the property tax exemption for certain paraplegic or amputee veterans or their surviving spouses.
- The number of days is unlimited for group pheasant hunts for disabled veterans and purple heart recipients.

Federal benefits are ever changing and can be very confusing. We encourage all veterans to visit their county or tribal veterans service officers (CTVSO's) and allow them to assist in filing claims. These men and women have worn the boots, walked the trenches, conducted maneuvers, commanded troops, sustained missions, and protected our freedoms. Who better to have on your team? To locate the CTVSO nearest you visit: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>

Now, more than ever, we need to continue to deliver on our promise to take care of our veterans. We will keep our sleeves rolled up and work collectively to ensure our veterans have a successful journey after they return home.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs