



**MINNESOTA COMMANDERS'  
TASK FORCE**

2014 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## Member Organizations



**American Ex-Prisoners of War**



**American Legion**



**AMVETS**



**Disabled American Veterans**



**Jewish War Veterans**



**Marine Corps League**



**Military Order of the Purple Heart**



**Veterans of Foreign Wars**



**Vietnam Veterans of America**

## About the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force

The Minnesota Commanders' Task Force (CTF) was created in 1988 and is comprised of elected commanders and appointed adjutants of nine congressionally-chartered Veterans Service Organizations in the state of Minnesota. Key functions of this group include:

- Developing a united veterans legislative agenda and actively advocating for it before state and elected officials.
- Serving as a non-partisan advisory group to the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), the Governor and Legislators on veterans' issues in the state.
- Working to seek and form Veterans Service Organization partnerships in program development (for example, the state's Veterans Day program).

**CTF SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROCESS TO CERTIFY VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES SO THAT THEY CAN COMPETE FOR BUSINESS AND CONTRACTS AT THE STATE LEVEL WITHOUT HAVING TO GO THROUGH THE FEDERAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS.**

The CTF believes there needs to be a way to streamline the Veteran-Owned Small Business certification process by developing a state level certification process.

Currently, Veteran-Owned Small Businesses must certify with the federal VA in order to compete with DBE's for state contracts outlined in Minn. Stat. 16C.16 if they want to use the 6% Veterans Preference. The federal certification process is more cumbersome than the state certification process for DBE's. Thus, a disadvantage is created for Veteran-Owned Small Business. Legislation requires that Veteran-Owned Small Business be awarded a preference in state procurement contracts and offers three means for a Veteran to demonstrate eligibility for the preference. The Department of Administration has oversight of this program through the Materials and Management Division. Due to lack of resources, the Department of Administration has made verification through the US Department of Veterans Affairs the only means available for Veterans to become eligible for the preference. This needs to change so veterans have the same opportunities as minority and women owned small business in the state.



## **CTF SUPPORTS A CHANGE IN THE VEHICLE REGISTRATION TAXES FOR 100% SERVICE CONNECTED VETERANS.**

Currently only 100% SC Veterans that access certain federal benefits are able to take advantage of 168.031. The intent of the benefit in 168.031 is directed toward 100% permanently disabled veterans, not just the ones who chose to apply for a specific federal program. CTF supports a change to simplify it so the state's 100% permanently disabled veterans qualify. We believe this is important and necessary because 100% service connected disabled veterans often require modified vehicles in order to conduct daily living and work related activities. With such a high disability rating, those veterans are often times at a disadvantage with healthy counterparts, be they veterans or those who have never served in the military. M.S. 168.031 (b) exempts veterans from registration tax if they take part in a federal program. In order to decrease disparities in veteran entitlements at the State level, CTF believes that any 100% service connected disabled veteran should be able to take advantage of the motor vehicle registration tax exemption.

## **CTF SUPPORTS A MILITARY PENSION TAX EXEMPTION.**

Pensions for Minnesota residents, including federal pensions, are taxable by Minnesota regardless of where the pension was earned. Minnesota is one of the last few hold-out states to tax military pensions. According to 2012 DOD Actuary data there are 18,368 retirees in MN, and of that, 16,988 are being paid by DOD. That equates to \$28,001,000 per month into the state. Many retirees are married with working spouses, and many retirees start second careers which continue to add to state revenues. MN is not gaining military retirees at the same rate as states which exempt military pensions from state

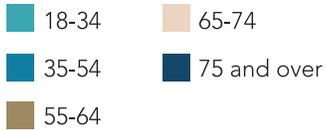
tax, and thus, the state is losing the potential veterans would bring back to the state. CTF believes it's time to address this issue and get on board with providing this benefit to retirees just as most other states do.

## **CTF SUPPORTS AMENDING MS 273.13 SUBD. 34, VETERAN HOMESTEAD TAX EXEMPTION.**

CTF would like to see a change for spouses of deceased veterans so that they can apply for the tax exemption after the death of their veteran. Current law requires the veteran to be in receipt of the Homestead Tax Exemption, and if the surviving spouse meets certain criteria then they may continue the exemption for up to five additional years. Many veterans do not know they are eligible and have never applied, but the the surviving spouse finds out after the death of their veterans. Current law states veteran must have been receiving the benefit in order for it to continue. CTF would like to have the capability to offer that benefit after the death of the veteran and amend the law to "if the veteran was eligible." Essentially, if a veteran is 100% SC disabled, they draw a monetary benefit and are eligible for some VA healthcare benefits currently. After the death of the veteran, the surviving spouse will lose 60-100% of the monetary benefit the veteran was receiving. Enabling veteran surviving spouses to take advantage of the Homestead Tax Exemption at the time of death, if they were not already enrolled, will greatly reduce their financial burden and potentially that of the state through other programs.

## VETERANS DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

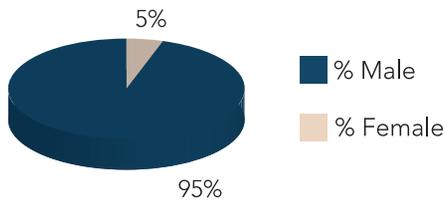
### MN Veteran Population by Age



### MN Veteran Population by Era

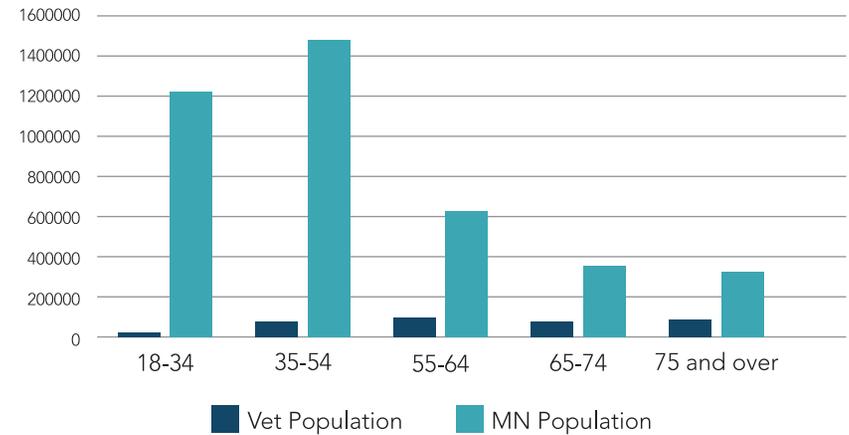


### MN VETERAN DISTRIBUTION BY SEX



**MN VETERANS MAKE UP 22% OF THE STATES 65-74 YEAR OLD POPULATION**

**MN VETERANS MAKE UP 28% OF THE STATES 75 AND OLDER POPULATION**



**Thank You**  
**for supporting**  
**Minnesota Veterans**  
**and active duty members**  
**of the Armed Forces!**

- Minnesota Commanders' Task Force



[minnesotaveteran.org](http://minnesotaveteran.org)

**1-888-LinkVet**  
**(546-5838)**