

1 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

2 FOR

3 **Senate Bill No. 469**

4 (By Senators Miller, Yost, Wells, Carmichael, Snyder, Nohe,  
5 Williams, Jenkins, D. Hall, Edgell, Stollings, Laird and Sypolt)

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7 [Originating in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural  
8 Development; reported February 11, 2014.]

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13 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by  
14 adding thereto a new section, designated §19-1-11, relating to  
15 the Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Program; granting the  
16 Department of Agriculture the authority to integrate veterans  
17 into the field of agriculture; creating the Veterans and  
18 Warriors to Agriculture special revenue account and fund;  
19 exempting the Department of Agriculture from certain  
20 purchasing requirements; requiring state departments to work  
21 together; and permitting rulemaking.

22 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

23 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended  
24 by adding thereto a new section, designated §19-1-11, to read as

1 follows:

2 **ARTICLE 1. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.**

3 **§19-1-11. Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Program and fund.**

4 (a) *Legislative findings.* --

5 West Virginians have a longstanding tradition of service in  
6 the armed forces of the United States. Many veterans suffer from  
7 physical and emotional afflictions and are often unable to find  
8 gainful employment upon returning from combat. Exploring  
9 opportunities to engage West Virginia's veterans in agriculture is  
10 beneficial to the health and welfare of veterans, as well as to the  
11 future of West Virginia's agricultural economy.

12 (b) *Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Program.* --

13 The Department of Agriculture shall develop a Veterans and  
14 Warriors to Agriculture Program to integrate veterans into the  
15 field of agriculture, and support veterans currently working in  
16 agriculture. These programs may include, but are not limited to,  
17 using post-mine land for agricultural development, promoting high  
18 tunnel crops and production, expanding the apiary industry,  
19 developing cottage industries, exploring niche crops, raising more  
20 livestock, increasing the aquaculture industry and helping veterans  
21 promote their agricultural products through farmers markets and  
22 cooperatives. The department, Department of Veterans' Assistance  
23 and the state's Adjutant General shall work together to recruit and  
24 train eligible veterans, and develop and support the program.

1           (c) *Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Fund.* --

2           There is hereby created in the State Treasury a special  
3 revenue account designated the Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture  
4 Fund. The fund shall consist of income from leasing the  
5 department's property for the program, income from the department's  
6 farm account not utilized for farm operations, private or  
7 charitable donations, legislative appropriations to maintain and  
8 operate the programs and accrued interest. Expenditures from the  
9 fund shall be used exclusively, in accordance with appropriations  
10 by the Legislature, to pay costs, fees and expenses necessary to  
11 administer the Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Program. Any  
12 balance remaining in the special revenue account at the end of any  
13 state fiscal year shall not revert to the General Revenue Fund but  
14 shall remain in the special revenue account and shall be used  
15 solely in a manner consistent with this section.

16           (d) Notwithstanding any provision in this code to the  
17 contrary, should the Department of Agriculture deem it necessary to  
18 provide land for activities within this program, it is exempt from  
19 the purchasing requirements as they relate to the competitive  
20 leasing of state property.

21           (e) The commissioner may propose emergency or legislative  
22 rules for approval in accordance with the provisions of article  
23 three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code to effectuate the  
24 provisions of this section.

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(NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to grant the Department of Agriculture the authority to create and maintain a program to encourage, support and develop West Virginia veterans into the field of agriculture. The bill creates the Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Fund. The bill makes findings and establishes intent. The bill exempts the Department of Agriculture from certain competitive bidding requirements. The bill requires state departments to work together. The bill sets forth funding requirements. The bill sets forth disbursements.

This section is new; therefore, strike-throughs and underscoring have been omitted.)