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MILITARY AND VETERANS RIGHTS BUREAU

The Attorney General's Military and Veterans Rights Bureau works to ensure that service members and veterans receive the benefits they have earned by serving our nation in the military. The bureau contends with a wide variety of financial and legal concerns affecting the military community, such as consumer fraud, scams connected with Veterans Affairs (VA) benefit assistance, military employment rights and housing issues. The work of the bureau can be grouped into four basic categories: Outreach, Advocacy/Mediation, Specialized Policy Support and Enforcement.

Education

The Military & Veterans Rights Bureau operates a Helpline, 1-800-382-3000, which averages over 500 calls annually. A Military & Veterans Rights Advocate fields calls from service members, veterans and dependents on a wide variety of issues related to military service, conducts necessary research, and provides useful information designed to assist in the receipt of veterans benefits.

Outreach

The Military and Veterans Rights Bureau provides assistance through programs and educational materials designed to help veterans and service members understand their rights and obtain services. As part of these efforts, the bureau publishes two detailed guidebooks for Illinois veterans and service members: *Benefits for Illinois Veterans* and *Legal Rights of Illinois Service Members*.

Advocacy/Mediation

The Military & Veterans Rights Advocate will attempt mediation in certain areas including;

- Mediation of service member employment disputes involving the Illinois Service Member Employment & Reemployment Rights Act.
- Mediating landlord-tenant disputes for service members facing Permanent Change of Station orders that conflict with lease agreements;
- Mediating financial transaction disputes, such as fraudulent credit report entries or erroneous debts;
- Obtaining compensation owed to veterans or to service members on military leave from their primary employer for annual guard training; and
- Securing refunds of disputed charges and fees.

Enforcement

The Military and Veterans Rights Bureau investigates allegations of pattern and practice violations of certain state-based military rights, which are also violations under the Illinois Human Rights Act. Additionally, as part of the Consumer Protection Division, the Military and Veterans Rights Bureau works to pursue or support enforcement actions involving cases of fraud targeting members of the armed forces.

Filing a complaint: You may file a complaint by calling the Military and Veterans Rights Helpline at 1-800-382-3000 or by filling out a complaint form on the Illinois Attorney General's website at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/veterans.html and submitting it to the Military and Veterans Rights Bureau by mail at the address listed on the form or by fax to (618) 236-8620.