

## **Colorado General Assembly 2008 Legislative Summary**

### The legislature passed the following bills dealing with veterans:

- HB 1078, the repayment of principal and interest (\$2.9M) of the Veteran's Trust Fund, unanimously, and is now awaiting Governor Ritter's signature. Governor Ritter made this one of his priorities for this session.
- HB 1035, the Military Relief Fund Check-off. The voluntary contribution check-off on individual tax return forms is extended from 2008 to 2011.
- HB 1303, the supplemental appropriations for capital construction. The appropriations bill included increased funding for construction of State Veterans' Nursing Home – Homelake. It added \$1.4M in federal funds and \$700k in state funds.
- SB 108, the Purple Heart Recipients Wildlife License. Purple Heart recipients will be issued free Colorado hunting and fishing licenses within the current program for disabled veterans.
- HJR 1007, Military and Veterans Appreciation Day, which was on February 13, 2008. It was a resolution to honor active duty military members and veterans.
- SJR 15, which states the Colorado General Assembly's endorsement of the proposed federal legislation, Veterans Education Assistance Act (renovating the GI Bill).

### Defeated legislation:

- The Senate defeated SCR 001, the Property Tax Exemption that would have extended to our Veteran Surviving Spouses and seniors who wanted to move and downsize. The measure would have then gone to voters, just like Referendum E did in 2006. There was near unanimous support for the Veteran Surviving Spouse portion, but because of the predicted expense relating to the senior's portion and other anticipated ballot measure concerns it was defeated last week. We will continue to work to fix this oversight in the language of Ref E.
- The House defeated the Purple Heart Tuition Waiver bill due to concerns with the costs to higher education, the choice of Purple Hearts as a criteria and the pending federal legislation for veteran educational benefits.
- The House defeated the Federal Land Acquisition bill, HB 1182, due to concerns with interfering between willing sellers and buyers and the unnecessary impediment approval of the legislature for every federal land purchase would cause. MSCPVA opposed this bill out of concerns around acquiring land for the new Federal Veterans Cemetery, VA medical centers and land for military readiness training.