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**Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management
Bureau of Veterans' Services
117 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0117**

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Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

The following is the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services' Annual Report on the Coordinated Veterans Assistance Fund for SFY 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023):

During SFY2023, the Bureau received \$151,386.27 from the taxation of table games at Maine casinos to fund "transportation for medical needs of veterans" and "veteran service officers at veteran hospital." This amount was distributed to Disabled American Veterans (\$15,000) to fund transportation, the American Legion (\$64,500.00), and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (\$64,500.00) to fund two Veterans Service Officers (VSO) positions for a total of \$144,000 with \$7,236.27 remaining. The fund also had \$20,768.60 of carry-over funds that were not properly cascaded from SFY2022, for a total of \$28,154.87 remaining at the end of SFY2023. The remainder of the fund was cascaded per M.R.S.A. 37-B §514(3). Due to administrative delays, these disbursements were not processed until the start of SFY2024. Of these remaining funds, the Veterans of Foreign Wars received \$5,630.97 from this cascade to "coordinate an annual event to benefit homeless veterans." The remaining funds are being disbursed to the Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery System Care Fund and to purchase flags for graves at veterans' cemeteries, as directed by statute.

During SFY2023, VSOs have assisted 1141 veterans with VA POAs, claims review, VA appeals and hearings, and general veteran challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

David Richmond, Director
Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services