

Bentley creates military study panel

Written by Associated Press

Dec. 11, 2013 |

montgomeryadvertiser.com

Gov. Robert Bentley established a group Tuesday to study ways to improve services for Alabama's active military members, veterans and military families.

Bentley created the Alabama Executive Veterans Network by signing an executive order at the Capitol while surrounded by members of the new group.

"Alabama is an extremely pro-military state, and it is important to help our military whenever we can," the Republican governor said.

The group will study and evaluate services directed at improving the well-being of service members, veterans and their families. It will look at education, employment, health care, homelessness and legal assistance, and strive to match people with the services they need, Bentley said.

The new group is headed by state Veterans Affairs Commissioner Clyde Marsh, who's a retired rear admiral, and state Mental Health Commissioner Jim Reddoch, who's a Vietnam War veteran. They are joined by officials from many state agencies, ranging from education to prisons.

Marsh said the group's work is crucial because Alabama has more than 420,000 veterans. Alabama also has nearly 12,000 active duty military and more than 22,000 Reserve and National Guard members.

Reddoch, a veteran of state government, said some commissions come and go without doing much, but he doesn't intend for that to happen with the new military group. "I have high hopes it will continue to serve a meaningful purpose," he said.