9–902.

(a)   There is a Department of Veterans Affairs, established as a principal department of the State government.

(b)   The head of the Department is the Secretary of Veterans Affairs who shall be:

(1)   a veteran who has an honorable discharge from active service with a uniformed service of the United States; and

(2)   appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(c)   (1)   The Secretary serves at the pleasure of the Governor and is responsible directly to the Governor. The Secretary shall advise the Governor on all matters assigned to the Department and is responsible for carrying out the Governor's policies on these matters.

(2)   The Secretary is responsible for the operation of the Department and shall establish guidelines and procedures to promote the orderly and efficient operation of the Department.

(3)   Subject to the provisions of this subtitle, the Secretary may establish, reorganize, or consolidate areas of responsibility in the Department as necessary to fulfill the duties assigned by the Secretary.

(4)   The Secretary shall adopt regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this subtitle.

(d)   The Secretary is entitled to the salary provided in the State budget.

9–903.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS THE LEGAL ADVISER TO THE DEPARTMENT.

[9–911.] 9–904.

(a)   [The Commission shall have a service center in Baltimore City, which shall be the principal office of the Commission.]

[(b)] (1)   The [Commission] DEPARTMENT may:

(i)   [have any additional] ESTABLISH service centers that the [Commission] DEPARTMENT considers necessary or advisable to facilitate and expedite the servicing of claims of veterans and dependents; and

(ii)   close any [additional] service center that the [Commission] DEPARTMENT no longer considers necessary.

(2)   The [Commission] DEPARTMENT shall try to locate each [additional] service center CENTRALLY IN THE AREA TO BE SERVED SO THAT THE GREATEST NUMBER OF VETERANS:

[(i)   centrally in the area to be served so that the greatest number of veterans:]