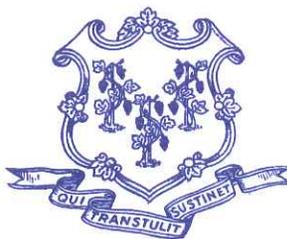


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**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**

*Chair*  
Veterans Affairs Committee  
*Vice-Chair*  
General Law Committee  
*Member*  
Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee  
Transportation Committee

Aging Committee Public Hearing  
Tuesday, March 06, 2012

Testimony of State Senator Carlo Leone in support of S.B. 283  
**AN ACT CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF BENEFITS RECEIVED UNDER  
THE VETERANS' AID AND ATTENDANCE IMPROVED PENSION.**

Good morning Senator Prague, Rep. Serra and the distinguished members of the Aging Committee. For the record, I am Sen. Leone of the 27th senate district representing the towns of Stamford and Darien. I am also the Co-Chairman of the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs. I wanted to thank the committee for raising this bill and speak in strong support of it.

This bill exempts monies received from the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs aid and attendance program from the income calculations for the Connecticut energy assistance program. It also allows the Department of Social Services to apply a waiver to exempt the benefits from income eligibility for the state supplement and medical assistance programs.

I think this is a very important piece of legislation and I want to commend the committee's membership for bringing this forward. In order to qualify for the Aid and Attendance program a veteran must first qualify for a VA pension. VA pensions are a benefit paid to wartime veterans who have limited or no income, and who are age 65 or older, or, if under 65, who are permanently and totally disabled. The Aid and Attendance program is a benefit paid in addition to a monthly pension. This benefit may not be paid without eligibility to pension. A veteran may be eligible for Aid and Attendance when:

1. The veteran requires the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting himself/herself from the hazards of his/her daily environment, **OR,**
2. The veteran is bedridden, in that his/her disability or disabilities requires that he/she remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment, **OR,**
3. The veteran is a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity, **OR,**

4. The veteran is blind, or so nearly blind as to have corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less, in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

If you look into the income calculations it means that a veteran with no dependants would have to make less than \$20,447 in order to qualify for a VA pension with the A&A kicker of \$9750.00 using rates established as of January 1st of 2012. That really isn't very much to live on so the fact that this bill can make it a little easier to qualify for the various other programs would have a meaningful impact.

Thank you for your consideration of this important piece of legislation and for hearing my testimony today.

Respectfully,

Carlo Leone  
State Senator  
Co-Chairman  
Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs