



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 76

February Session, 2014

House Bill No. 5001

House of Representatives, March 25, 2014

The Committee on Aging reported through REP. SERRA of the 33rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT PROVIDING RENTAL COST RELIEF TO ELIGIBLE SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 12-170d of the 2014 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective July 1, 2014*):

4 (a) Beginning with the calendar year 1973 and for each calendar
5 year thereafter any renter of real property, or of a mobile
6 manufactured home, as defined in section 12-63a, which [he] such
7 renter occupies as his or her home, who meets the qualifications set
8 forth in this section, shall be entitled to receive in the following year in
9 the form of direct payment from the state, a grant in refund of utility
10 and rent bills actually paid by or for [him] such renter on such real
11 property or mobile manufactured home to the extent set forth in
12 section 12-170e. Such grant by the state shall be made upon receipt by
13 the state of a certificate of grant with a copy of the application therefor
14 attached, as provided in section 12-170f, provided such application

15 shall be made within one year from the close of the calendar year for
16 which the grant is requested. If the rental quarters are occupied by
17 more than one person, it shall be assumed for the purposes of this
18 section and sections 12-170e and 12-170f that each of such persons pays
19 his or her proportionate share of the rental and utility expenses levied
20 thereon and grants shall be calculated on that portion of utility and
21 rent bills paid that are applicable to the person making application for
22 grant under said sections. For purposes of this section and [said]
23 sections 12-170e and 12-170f, a [husband and wife] married couple
24 shall constitute one tenant, and a resident of cooperative housing shall
25 be a renter. To qualify for such payment by the state, the renter shall
26 meet qualification requirements in accordance with each of the
27 following subdivisions: (1) (A) At the close of the calendar year for
28 which a grant is claimed be sixty-five years of age or over, or his or her
29 spouse who is residing with [him] such renter shall be sixty-five years
30 of age or over, at the close of such year, or be fifty years of age or over
31 and the surviving spouse of a renter who at the time of his or her death
32 had qualified and was entitled to tax relief under this chapter,
33 provided such spouse was domiciled with such renter at the time of
34 his or her death, or (B) at the close of the calendar year for which a
35 grant is claimed be under age sixty-five and eligible in accordance with
36 applicable federal regulations, to receive permanent total disability
37 benefits under Social Security, or if [he] such renter has not been
38 engaged in employment covered by Social Security and accordingly
39 has not qualified for Social Security benefits [thereunder] but has
40 become qualified for permanent total disability benefits under any
41 federal, state or local government retirement or disability plan,
42 including the Railroad Retirement Act and any government-related
43 teacher's retirement plan, determined by the Secretary of the Office of
44 Policy and Management to contain requirements in respect to
45 qualification for such permanent total disability benefits which are
46 comparable to such requirements under Social Security; (2) shall reside
47 within this state and shall have resided within this state for at least one
48 year or [his] such renter's spouse who is domiciled with [him] such
49 renter shall have resided within this state for at least one year and shall

50 reside within this state at the time of filing the claim and shall have
51 resided within this state for the period for which claim is made; (3)
52 shall have taxable and nontaxable income, the total of which shall
53 hereinafter be called "qualifying income", during the calendar year
54 preceding the filing of [his] such renter's claim in an amount of not
55 more than twenty thousand dollars, jointly with spouse, if married,
56 and not more than sixteen thousand two hundred dollars if unmarried,
57 provided such maximum amounts of qualifying income shall be
58 subject to adjustment in accordance with subdivision (2) of subsection
59 (a) of section 12-170e, and provided the amount of any Medicaid
60 payments made on behalf of the renter or the spouse of the renter shall
61 not constitute income; and (4) shall not have received financial aid or
62 subsidy from federal, state, county or municipal funds, excluding
63 Social Security receipts, emergency energy assistance under any state
64 program, emergency energy assistance under any federal program,
65 emergency energy assistance under any local program, payments
66 received under the federal Supplemental Security Income Program,
67 payments derived from previous employment, veterans and veterans
68 disability benefits and subsidized housing accommodations, during
69 the calendar year for which a grant is claimed, for payment, directly or
70 indirectly, of rent, electricity, gas, water and fuel applicable to the
71 rented residence. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (4) of
72 this subsection, a renter who receives cash assistance from the
73 Department of Social Services in the calendar year prior to that in
74 which such renter files an application for a grant may be entitled to
75 receive such grant provided the amount of the cash assistance received
76 shall be deducted from the amount of such grant and the difference
77 between the amount of the cash assistance and the amount of the grant
78 is equal to or greater than ten dollars. Funds attributable to such
79 reductions shall be transferred annually from the appropriation to the
80 Department of Housing, for tax relief for elderly renters, to the
81 Department of Social Services, to the appropriate accounts, following
82 the issuance of such grants. Notwithstanding the provisions of
83 subsection (b) of section 12-170aa, the owner of a mobile manufactured
84 home may elect to receive benefits under section 12-170e in lieu of

85 benefits under said section 12-170aa.

86 (b) For purposes of determining qualifying income under subsection
 87 (a) of this section with respect to a married renter who submits an
 88 application for a grant in accordance with sections 12-170d to 12-170g,
 89 inclusive, the Social Security income of the spouse of such renter shall
 90 not be included in the qualifying income of such renter, for purposes
 91 of determining eligibility for benefits under said sections, if such
 92 spouse is a resident of a health care or nursing home facility in this
 93 state receiving payment related to such spouse under the Title XIX
 94 Medicaid program. An applicant who is legally separated pursuant to
 95 the provisions of section 46b-40, as of the thirty-first day of December
 96 preceding the date on which such person files an application for a
 97 grant in accordance with sections 12-170d to 12-170g, inclusive, may
 98 apply as an unmarried person and shall be regarded as such for
 99 purposes of determining qualifying income under subsection (a) of this
 100 section.

101 [(c) Any individual who did not receive a grant for the calendar
 102 year 2011 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall not be eligible
 103 to apply for a grant under this program. Any individual who did
 104 receive a grant for the calendar year 2011 pursuant to subsection (a) of
 105 this section shall continue to be eligible to apply for a grant under this
 106 section, provided that any such individual who does not receive a
 107 grant in any subsequent calendar year shall no longer be eligible to
 108 apply for a grant under this program.]

109 Sec. 2. (*Effective July 1, 2014*) The sum of ____ dollars is appropriated
 110 to the Department of Housing from the General Fund, for the fiscal
 111 year ending June 30, 2015, for purposes of providing financial relief to
 112 eligible elderly persons and persons with disabilities pursuant to
 113 section 12-170d of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2014</i>	12-170d

Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2014</i>	New section
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AGE *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 15 \$	FY 16 \$
Department of Housing	GF - Cost	6.5 million	6.5 million

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in a cost of \$6.5 million to the Department of Housing by expanding eligibility for the Renters' Rebate program. In effect, the bill reverses the ineligibility of certain applicants to the program under PA 13-234 beginning in FY 15. It is anticipated that 12,700 persons would be eligible to apply to the program as a result of this bill.¹

The current FY 15 budget includes \$3.0 million of the \$6.5 million needed to expand the program as proposed under the bill. The net cost to the agency in FY 15 is therefore \$3.5 million.

The bill also appropriates an unspecified sum to the Department of Housing to administer the program. To the extent that such appropriation differs from the estimated cost of the program, including the expansion of eligibility, there may be additional costs or savings.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

¹ Governor's Office press release dated February 3, 2014.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 5001*****AN ACT PROVIDING RENTAL COST RELIEF TO ELIGIBLE SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill reopens the rental rebate program to new and previous applicants who meet the eligibility criteria. Current law makes a person ineligible for the rental rebate program if they did not receive a grant from the program in 2011 or in any subsequent calendar year.

The bill also appropriates an unspecified sum in FY 15 to the Department of Housing from the General Fund, for financial assistance to rental rebate program participants and makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

BACKGROUND***Rental Rebate Relief***

Rental relief entitles qualified seniors and individuals with a total disability to a partial refund of rent and utility bills. An applicant must (1) be totally disabled, be age 65 or older, have a spouse who is age 65 or older, or be at least 50 years old and a surviving spouse of someone who at the time of his or her death was eligible for the program; (2) occupy the property as his or her home; (3) have resided in Connecticut at least one year before applying for benefits; and (4) meet income qualifications. The current qualifying income, with certain exceptions, is not more than \$20,000 for a married couple, or \$16,200 for a single individual.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Aging Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/11/2014)