



General Assembly

February Session, 2016

Raised Bill No. 5348

LCO No. 1035



Referred to Committee on PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS

Introduced by:
(PRI)

AN ACT STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION AMONG THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS, OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND MUNICIPALITIES BASED ON A PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE STUDY.

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

- 1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Commissioner of Veterans'
2 Affairs shall, in consultation with at least the Labor Commissioner and
3 the Commissioner of Social Services, review (1) each service provided
4 to veterans by each state agency, (2) the system of delivering each such
5 service to veterans, and (3) whether office space or administrative
6 functions across all such agencies may be consolidated to improve and
7 better coordinate the structure of providing such service to veterans.
- 8 (b) Not later than December 31, 2016, the Commissioner of Veterans'
9 Affairs shall submit a report to the Governor and the joint standing
10 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
11 relating to veterans' affairs, in accordance with the provisions of
12 section 11-4a of the general statutes, on (1) the results of the review

13 described in subsection (a) of this section, and (2) any recommendation
14 based on such results, together with the reason for any such
15 recommendation. The Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs shall also
16 provide a copy of such report to the Labor Commissioner and the
17 Commissioner of Social Services.

18 (c) The Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs, the Labor Commissioner
19 and the Commissioner of Social Services shall enter into a
20 memorandum of understanding to effectuate the purposes of this
21 section.

22 Sec. 2. Section 27-135 of the general statutes is repealed and the
23 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

24 (a) Any city or town, either separately or with one or more other
25 cities and towns, may, by ordinance, establish a local veterans'
26 advisory committee which shall have the responsibility of carrying out
27 locally the duties and purposes of this section and, within their charter
28 powers and as otherwise provided by law, may make available to such
29 local committees the necessary funds to carry out their duties and
30 responsibilities. The committee may (1) act as the coordinating agency
31 in all matters concerning veterans and their dependents, coordinating
32 the activities of public and private facilities concerned with veterans'
33 reemployment, education, rehabilitation and adjustment to peacetime
34 living; (2) cooperate with all national, state and local governmental and
35 private agencies in securing services and benefits to which a veteran or
36 his dependents may be entitled; (3) use the services and facilities of the
37 veterans organizations so far as possible to carry out the purposes of
38 this section; and (4) encourage and coordinate vocational training
39 services for veterans.

40 (b) (1) Any city or town that [(1)] (A) has not established its own
41 local veterans' advisory committee separate from one or more other
42 cities or towns pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, and [(2)] (B)
43 does not otherwise provide funding for a veterans' service officer shall

44 designate a city or town employee to serve as a veterans' service
45 contact person in such city or town. The Commissioner of Veterans'
46 Affairs shall annually send to the chief executive officer of any such
47 city or town an electronic notification of such chief executive officer's
48 duty to so designate a city or town employee in accordance with this
49 subsection. Such chief executive officer shall, not later than thirty days
50 after receipt of such notification, submit to the veterans' advocacy and
51 assistance unit, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as
52 amended by this act, the name and electronic mail address of the city
53 or town employee so designated. As used in this subparagraph, "chief
54 executive officer" means the officer described in section 7-193.

55 (2) Any city or town employee designated as a veterans' service
56 contact person shall carry out the duties described in subsection (a) of
57 this section and [may complete an annual] shall complete a training
58 course conducted by the veterans' advocacy and assistance unit. [as
59 described in subsection (b) of section 27-102l] Each veterans' service
60 contact person so designated prior to July 1, 2016, shall complete such
61 training course prior to January 1, 2017. Each veterans' service contact
62 person so designated on or after July 1, 2016, shall complete such
63 training course not later than six months after the date of such
64 designation.

65 Sec. 3. Subsection (b) of section 27-102l of the 2016 supplement to
66 the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
67 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

68 (b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a unit head to administer a
69 veterans' advocacy and assistance unit for the aid and benefit of
70 veterans [,] and their spouses, [and] eligible dependents and family
71 members. [Such unit shall conduct an annual training course for any
72 city or town employee designated a veterans' service contact person
73 pursuant to subsection (b) of section 27-135.] The unit shall have a staff
74 of not less than eight men and women, including six service officers,
75 and clerical personnel. The unit head and the service officers shall be

76 veterans, as defined in section 27-103, or veterans who were awarded
 77 the armed forces expeditionary medal for service by the armed forces.
 78 At least one of the service officers shall be a woman having a
 79 demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans, who shall be
 80 responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective upon the next
 81 opening of a service officer position occurring on or after July 1, 2010,
 82 at least two of the service officers shall be individuals having bilingual
 83 proficiency in English and Spanish, within existing authorized
 84 positions. Each service officer shall successfully complete a course in
 85 veterans' benefits within one year of commencement of employment
 86 and shall be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the
 87 state.

88 (2) The unit staff shall conduct a quarterly training course for any
 89 city or town employee designated a veterans' service contact person
 90 pursuant to subsection (b) of section 27-135, as amended by this act.
 91 The unit staff shall include in such training course a summary of state
 92 and federal services and benefits, the duties to be carried out by each
 93 veterans' service contact person, as described in subsection (a) of
 94 section 27-135, as amended by this act, and any assistance the unit staff
 95 may provide to any veterans' service contact person related to such
 96 duties. The unit staff shall, upon completion of each such training
 97 course, request feedback from each attending veterans' service contact
 98 person describing his or her satisfaction with the conduct and content
 99 of such training course and utilize such feedback to make any
 100 necessary modifications in such training course.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2016</i>	27-135
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2016</i>	27-1021(b)

Statement of Purpose:

To improve (1) collaboration among state agencies providing services to veterans, and (2) communication and coordination between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and municipalities in serving the state's veteran population.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]