



General Assembly

## ***Amendment***

***February Session, 2016***

**LCO No. 5092**



Offered by:

SEN. FASANO, 34<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. WITKOS, 8<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. CHAPIN, 30<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. FORMICA, 20<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. FRANTZ, 36<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. HWANG, 28<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. KANE, 32<sup>nd</sup> Dist.

SEN. KELLY, 21<sup>st</sup> Dist.  
SEN. KISSEL, 7<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. LINARES, 33<sup>rd</sup> Dist.  
SEN. MARKLEY, 16<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. MARTIN, 31<sup>st</sup> Dist.  
SEN. MCLACHLAN, 24<sup>th</sup> Dist.

To: Senate Bill No. **21**

File No. 78

Cal. No. 125

### ***"AN ACT CONCERNING THE MILITARY DEPARTMENT'S NONDISCRIMINATION LAWS."***

1 After the last section, add the following and renumber sections and  
2 internal references accordingly:

3 "Sec. 501. Subsections (b) and (c) of section 27-102l of the 2016  
4 supplement to the general statutes are repealed and the following is  
5 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

6 (b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a unit head to administer a  
7 veterans' advocacy and assistance unit for the aid and benefit of  
8 veterans [L] and their spouses, [and] eligible dependents and family  
9 members. [Such unit shall conduct an annual training course for any  
10 city or town employee designated a veterans' service contact person

11 pursuant to subsection (b) of section 27-135.] The unit shall have a staff  
12 of not less than eight men and women, including six service officers,  
13 and clerical personnel. The unit head and the service officers shall be  
14 veterans, as defined in section 27-103, or veterans who were awarded  
15 the armed forces expeditionary medal for service by the armed forces.  
16 At least one of the service officers shall be a woman having a  
17 demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans, who shall be  
18 responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective upon the next  
19 opening of a service officer position occurring on or after July 1, 2010,  
20 at least two of the service officers shall be individuals having bilingual  
21 proficiency in English and Spanish, within existing authorized  
22 positions. Each service officer shall successfully complete a course in  
23 veterans' benefits within one year of commencement of employment  
24 and shall be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the  
25 state.

26 (2) The unit staff shall, at least twice annually, conduct a training  
27 course for any city or town employee designated a veterans' service  
28 contact person pursuant to subsection (b) of section 27-135, as  
29 amended by this act. The unit staff shall include in such training  
30 course a summary of state and federal services and benefits, the duties  
31 to be carried out by each veterans' service contact person, as described  
32 in subsection (a) of section 27-135, as amended by this act, and any  
33 assistance the unit staff may provide to any veterans' service contact  
34 person related to such duties.

35 (3) (A) The veterans' advocacy and assistance unit shall develop a  
36 written outreach plan identifying (i) strategies for conducting outreach  
37 to veterans and their spouses, eligible dependents and family members  
38 for purposes of providing assistance in claims for veterans' services or  
39 benefits, and (ii) to the extent possible, specific events and other  
40 opportunities to provide such assistance that are sponsored by the unit  
41 or in which the unit is participating. The unit shall update such written  
42 outreach plan as necessary to improve the efficacy of its outreach  
43 efforts.

44 (B) The unit head and each service officer shall electronically track  
45 information relating to outreach conducted or attended by the unit,  
46 including, but not limited to, the title or type of any outreach event  
47 conducted or attended and the number of veterans or their spouses,  
48 eligible dependents or family members to whom substantive services  
49 or referrals were provided.

50 (C) The unit shall utilize the notifications received from the  
51 administrator of each nursing home and assisted living facility in the  
52 state, pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of this section, to  
53 develop an annual schedule for each service officer to visit nursing  
54 homes and assisted living facilities. The unit shall compile any  
55 information collected as a result of such visits and provide quarterly  
56 reports on such information to the Board of Trustees for the  
57 Department of Veterans' Affairs.

58 (D) The unit shall provide quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees  
59 for the Department of Veterans' Affairs on (i) concerns raised by  
60 veterans or their spouses, eligible dependents or family members,  
61 which concerns shall be summarized by type, frequency and  
62 resolution, (ii) petitions filed by veterans or their spouses, eligible  
63 dependents or family members received by the commissioner under  
64 section 27-102(d)-54 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies  
65 for the four preceding months, and (iii) copies of any such petitions.

66 (c) In addition to the powers and duties prescribed under section 4-  
67 8, the commissioner shall have the following powers and duties:

68 (1) To prepare studies and collect information concerning facilities  
69 and services available to members of the armed forces [,] or veterans [,  
70 their] or the spouses or eligible dependents of such members or  
71 veterans, including facilities and services for veterans who may have  
72 been exposed to a Vietnam herbicide during their periods of military  
73 service;

74 (2) To [conduct interviews in the nursing homes or hospitals  
75 throughout the state to determine the number of veterans admitted

76 and ascertaining which benefits such veterans are currently receiving  
77 and are entitled to receive] require that the administrator of each  
78 nursing home and assisted living facility in the state notify the  
79 veterans' advocacy and assistance unit not later than April 1, 2017, and  
80 every six months thereafter, of any new resident in such nursing home  
81 or assisted living facility who is a veteran or a spouse, eligible  
82 dependent or family member of a veteran, provided each such nursing  
83 home or assisted living facility shall not release the identity of any  
84 such new resident to the unit without the consent of the new resident.  
85 As used in this subdivision, "new resident" means a resident of whom  
86 such nursing home or assisted living facility has not previously  
87 notified the veterans' advocacy and assistance unit;

88 (3) To cooperate with service agencies and organizations  
89 throughout the state in disseminating and furnishing counsel and  
90 assistance of benefit to residents of this state who are or have been  
91 members of the armed forces [,] or their spouses or eligible  
92 dependents, which will indicate the availability of: (A) Educational  
93 training and retraining facilities; (B) health, medical, rehabilitation and  
94 housing services and facilities; (C) employment and reemployment  
95 services; (D) provisions of federal, state and local laws affording  
96 financial rights, privileges and benefits; and (E) other matters of  
97 similar nature;

98 (4) To assist veterans [,] and their spouses, [,and] eligible dependents  
99 and family members in the preparation, presentation, proof and  
100 establishment of such claims, privileges, rights and other benefits  
101 accruing to them under federal, state and local laws;

102 (5) To cooperate with all national, state and local governmental and  
103 private agencies securing or offering services or any benefits to  
104 veterans [,] or their spouses or eligible dependents;

105 (6) To develop and prepare a long-range plan and mission statement  
106 for the Veterans' Home and the veterans' advocacy and assistance unit;

107 (7) To review all appeals made by veterans [,] or their spouses, [,or]

108 eligible dependents or family members and render the final decision  
109 thereon regarding the denial of admission to any program or the  
110 refusal to render any service or benefit which is administered by the  
111 Department of Veterans' Affairs, the discharge or transfer from any  
112 such program or any disciplinary action taken while participating in  
113 any such program; and

114 (8) If the Veterans' Home closes or ceases to provide housing to  
115 veterans, to provide or arrange for housing to any veteran residing at  
116 the home or the health care facility within the home on the date of such  
117 closure or on the date the Veterans' Home ceases to provide housing to  
118 veterans.

119 Sec. 502. Section 27-135 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
120 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

121 (a) Any city or town, either separately or with one or more other  
122 cities and towns, may, by ordinance, establish a local veterans'  
123 advisory committee which shall have the responsibility of carrying out  
124 locally the duties and purposes of this section and, within their charter  
125 powers and as otherwise provided by law, may make available to such  
126 local committees the necessary funds to carry out their duties and  
127 responsibilities. The committee may (1) act as the coordinating agency  
128 in all matters concerning veterans and their dependents, coordinating  
129 the activities of public and private facilities concerned with veterans'  
130 reemployment, education, rehabilitation and adjustment to peacetime  
131 living; (2) cooperate with all national, state and local governmental and  
132 private agencies in securing services and benefits to which a veteran or  
133 his dependents may be entitled; (3) use the services and facilities of the  
134 veterans organizations so far as possible to carry out the purposes of  
135 this section; and (4) encourage and coordinate vocational training  
136 services for veterans.

137 (b) (1) Any city or town that [(1)] has not established its own local  
138 veterans' advisory committee separate from one or more other cities or  
139 towns pursuant to subsection (a) of this section [, and (2)] and does not

140 otherwise provide funding for a veterans' service officer shall  
 141 designate a city or town employee to serve as a veterans' service  
 142 contact person in such city or town. The Commissioner of Veterans'  
 143 Affairs shall annually send to the chief executive officer of any such  
 144 city or town an electronic notification of such chief executive officer's  
 145 duty to so designate a city or town employee in accordance with this  
 146 subsection. Such chief executive officer shall, not later than thirty days  
 147 after receipt of such notification, submit to the veterans' advocacy and  
 148 assistance unit, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as  
 149 amended by this act, the name and electronic mail address of the city  
 150 or town employee so designated. As used in this subdivision, "chief  
 151 executive officer" means the officer described in section 7-193.

152 (2) Any city or town employee designated as a veterans' service  
 153 contact person shall carry out the duties described in subsection (a) of  
 154 this section and [may complete an annual] shall complete a training  
 155 course conducted by the veterans' advocacy and assistance unit, as  
 156 described in subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as  
 157 amended by this act. Each employee so designated prior to July 1,  
 158 2016, shall complete such training course prior to January 1, 2017. Each  
 159 employee so designated on or after July 1, 2016, shall complete such  
 160 training course not later than one year after the date of such  
 161 designation. Upon completion of such training course, a veterans'  
 162 service contact person may thereafter receive electronically any new or  
 163 updated training information from the veterans' advocacy and  
 164 assistance unit and shall not be required to complete any other such  
 165 training course."

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Sec. 501	October 1, 2016	27-102l(b) and (c)
Sec. 502	October 1, 2016	27-135