



General Assembly

January Session, 2017

Substitute Bill No. 916

* SB00916VA 030617 *

**AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR AND CONFORMING CHANGES TO
STATUTES CONCERNING VETERANS.**

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

1 Section 1. Subdivisions (2) to (4), inclusive, of subsection (b) of
2 section 27-102l of the general statutes are repealed and the following is
3 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2017*):

4 (2) (A) The [unit head] manager shall develop a training module on
5 assisting and serving women veterans with regard to state or federal
6 services or benefits and identifying and advising such veterans of
7 community or nonprofit programs focused on assisting and serving
8 such veterans. The [unit head] manager shall hold and provide
9 instruction for an annual training session, in accordance with such
10 module, to each veterans' services officer and any veterans' service
11 contact person, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-135, or
12 representative from an Operation Academic Support for Incoming
13 Service Members center at a public institution of higher education in
14 this state.

15 (B) At least one of the veterans' service officers shall be a woman
16 having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans,
17 who shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective
18 upon the next opening of a veterans' service officer position occurring
19 on or after July 1, 2010, at least two of the veterans' service officers
20 shall be individuals having bilingual proficiency in English and

21 Spanish, within existing authorized positions. Each veterans' service
22 officer shall (i) successfully complete a course in veterans' benefits
23 [within one year of] not later than one year after commencement of
24 employment, (ii) attend the training session described in subparagraph
25 (A) of this subdivision, and (iii) be assigned to one of the five
26 congressional districts of the state.

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

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

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

51 (C) The [unit] office shall utilize the notifications received from the
52 administrator of each nursing home and assisted living facility in the

53 state, pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of this section, to
54 develop an annual schedule for each veterans' service officer to visit
55 nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The [unit] office shall
56 compile any information collected as a result of such visits and provide
57 quarterly reports on such information to the Board of Trustees for the
58 Department of Veterans Affairs.

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

67 Sec. 2. Subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of section 27-102l of the
68 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
69 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2017*):

70 (2) To require that the administrator of each nursing home and
71 assisted living facility in the state notify the [veterans' advocacy and
72 assistance unit] Office of Advocacy and Assistance not later than April
73 1, 2017, and every six months thereafter, of any new resident in such
74 nursing home or assisted living facility who is a veteran or a spouse,
75 eligible dependent or family member of a veteran, provided each such
76 nursing home or assisted living facility shall not release the identity of
77 any such new resident to the [unit] office without the consent of the
78 new resident. As used in this subdivision, "new resident" means a
79 resident of whom such nursing home or assisted living facility has not
80 previously notified the [veterans' advocacy and assistance unit] Office
81 of Advocacy and Assistance;

82 Sec. 3. Subsection (b) of section 27-135 of the general statutes is
83 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
84 *October 1, 2017*):

85 (b) (1) Any city or town that has not established its own local
86 veterans' advisory committee separate from one or more other cities or
87 towns pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and does not otherwise
88 provide funding for a veterans' service officer shall designate a city or
89 town employee to serve as a veterans' service contact person in such
90 city or town. The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall annually
91 send to the chief executive officer of any such city or town an
92 electronic notification of such chief executive officer's duty to so
93 designate a city or town employee in accordance with this subsection.
94 Such chief executive officer shall, not later than thirty days after receipt
95 of such notification, submit to the [veterans' advocacy and assistance
96 unit] Office of Advocacy and Assistance, as described in subsection (b)
97 of section 27-102l, as amended by this act, the name and electronic mail
98 address of the city or town employee so designated. As used in this
99 subdivision, "chief executive officer" means the officer described in
100 section 7-193.

101 (2) Any city or town employee designated as a veterans' service
102 contact person shall carry out the duties described in subsection (a) of
103 this section and shall complete a training course conducted by the
104 [veterans' advocacy and assistance unit] Office of Advocacy and
105 Assistance, as described in subdivision [(1)] (3) of subsection (b) of
106 section 27-102l, as amended by this act, or attend a training session
107 conducted by the [unit head] manager of said [unit] office, as described
108 in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of said section.
109 Each employee so designated prior to July 1, 2016, shall complete such
110 training course prior to January 1, 2017. Each employee so designated
111 on or after July 1, 2016, shall complete such training course not later
112 than one year after the date of such designation. Upon completion of
113 such training course, a veterans' service contact person may thereafter
114 receive electronically any new or updated training information from
115 the [veterans' advocacy and assistance unit] Office of Advocacy and
116 Assistance and shall not be required to complete any other such
117 training course.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	27-1021(b)(2) to (4)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	27-1021(c)(2)
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	27-135(b)

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1, Subdivs. (3) and (4) were added and Sections 2 and 3 were added to make conforming changes; and the title was changed.

VA *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*