



# Acts Affecting Veterans and the Military

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## Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (Public Acts) affecting veterans and the military enacted during the 2018 regular session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports are, or soon will be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/actsaffecting.asp>.

Each summary indicates the Public Act (PA) number and effective date. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden.

Complete summaries of Public Acts are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/olrsums.asp>. Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <http://www.cga.ct.gov>.

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## **Benefits**

### ***Additional Local Option Tax for Veterans***

A new law clarifies the income limit that makes a veteran eligible for the additional optional municipal veteran's property tax exemption. Under existing law, the qualifying income is (1) a certain amount set by the municipality or (2) the maximum amount under the uniform income requirements for property tax exemptions that apply to unmarried individuals. The new law clarifies the qualifying income tied to the uniform income requirements by incorporating the maximum applicable amount for married joint filers ([PA 18-72](#), § 43, effective October 1, 2018 and applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date).

### ***Civil Service Exams***

A new law gives five bonus points to certain armed forces members who achieve a passing score on initial state civil service examinations. A service member qualifies for the bonus points if he or she is in the final year of an enlistment contract with any branch of the armed forces ([PA 18-44](#), effective October 1, 2018).

Another new law also gives five civil service exam bonus points to veterans who (1) were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or for bad conduct and (2) have a "qualifying condition" (i.e., a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury made by an individual licensed to provide care at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility, or who have disclosed a military sexual trauma experience to such a provider) ([PA 18-47](#) (§ 4), effective October 1, 2018).

### ***Eligibility for Benefits for Certain Veterans with a "Qualifying Condition"***

The legislature extended certain benefits, available to veterans honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions from active service in the armed forces, to veterans who (1) were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or for bad conduct and (2) have a "qualifying condition" (i.e., a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury made by an individual licensed to provide care at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility, or who have disclosed a military sexual trauma experience to such a provider). The benefits extended include:

1. tuition waivers for the state's public colleges and universities if the veteran served in time of war;
2. state-mandated wartime property tax exemptions (minimum \$1,500);
3. motor vehicle license and registration fee exemptions, under certain conditions;

4. temporary aid (such as food, clothing, and medical aid) from the Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund;
5. income disregards (i.e., federal Aid and Attendance Pension) when calculating income for means-tested assistance programs (e.g., Medicaid); and
6. preference for state-funded low- or moderate-income rental housing ([PA 18-47](#), most provisions effective October 1, 2018).

### ***Foreclosure Protection Related to Delinquent Sewer Assessment Payments***

A new law requires municipalities served by a PURA-regulated private water company with a population of at least 100,000 to adopt ordinances that, among other things, protect veterans, seniors, and low-income families from water pollution control authority foreclosures by restricting accelerated foreclosure proceedings for past due sewer fees. The new law also institutes a one year delay for foreclosure actions on liens held by water pollution control authorities ([PA 18-174](#), effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Institutional Aid for Undocumented Honorably Discharged Veterans***

A new law allows certain honorably discharged veterans without legal immigration status to access institutional aid to attend a state public higher education institution (i.e., UConn and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities). These veterans are eligible, to the extent allowed by federal law, if they meet certain age and criminal history requirements and file with the institution an affidavit about their intent to legalize their immigration status ([PA 18-2](#), effective upon passage).

### ***Military Department Family Program Volunteer Services***

The legislature expanded several aspects of the Military Department's family program volunteer services. It expanded the (1) duties of the program's volunteer service coordinator; (2) work volunteers can do, including providing services to the Military Department; and (3) list of people who may receive volunteer services under the program to include veterans, in-state service members who are not on active duty, and their families ([PA 18-106](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Optional Municipal Veterans Property Tax Exemption Income Threshold Increase***

The legislature now allows municipalities that provide certain additional optional veteran property tax exemptions to increase the income thresholds for eligibility, with the minimum being the amount the state annually sets for other property tax exemptions (for 2018, \$35,300 for individuals and \$43,000 for married couples) ([PA 18-102](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Teacher Permit for Veterans' Spouses***

Under a new law, the State Board of Education, upon receipt of a proper application, must issue a three-year "military spouse teacher permit" to certain military spouses who have taught for at least two years under an appropriate certificate issued by another state, the District of Columbia, a U.S. territory or possession, or Puerto Rico. In doing so, the act permits such individuals to teach in the Connecticut public school system. The bill applies to the spouse of any member of the armed forces who has received military orders to come to Connecticut ([PA 18-144](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Youth Military Organizations***

The legislature specifically authorized the adjutant general to allow youth military organizations to use military facilities at no cost. Prior law limits the use of military facilities to military organizations, nonprofit organizations, organizations receiving state aid, and government agencies.

By law, the adjutant general is charged with the responsibility for the use, maintenance, security, and leasing of all military facilities. Under existing law, he may allow use of military facilities at a cost up to the actual operating cost of the facility during the period of use. The new law specifically exempts youth military organization from this cost ([PA 18-143](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## **Miscellaneous**

### ***Adjutant General's Record Keeping***

A new law specifies that requests for Military Department records and documents generated and maintained by the adjutant general under either state or federal law must be processed under their respective state or federal Freedom of Information Acts (FOIA). The new law also (1) specifies that the records the adjutant general keeps are service records and (2) requires him to generate Military Department records and documents instead of just maintaining them ([PA 18-104](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Employment Discrimination Based on Veteran Status***

A new law generally requires state agency, municipal public works, and quasi-public agency project contracts to require the contractor to (1) agree that, in performing the contract, he or she will not unlawfully discriminate or permit discrimination on the grounds of veteran status and (2) agree to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated without regard to their status as a veteran. Existing law prohibits contractors from discriminating against various protected classes (e.g., on the basis of race, age, disability) ([PA 18-75](#) (§ 2), effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Licensing Authorities' Report on Veterans***

A new law adds the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee to the list of committees and agencies who receive annual reports from licensing authorities about service members who receive credit for military training or experience when applying for a license. Under existing law, these licensing authorities send the reports to the Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Department of Labor ([PA 18-37](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Military Spouses' Day***

A new law requires the governor to proclaim November 12 of each year to be Military Spouses' Day to acknowledge the contributions, support, and sacrifices of spouses of members of the Armed Forces. It allows suitable observance exercises to be held in the state capitol and elsewhere as the governor designates ([PA 18-60](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Task Force on Transportation for Veterans, Seniors, and Persons with Disabilities***

A new law establishes a 13-member task force to study issues with publicly-funded transportation for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and veterans. The study must include (1) other states' best practices; (2) services and public transportation fare discounts currently available; (3) current and anticipated transportation needs; and (4) ways Connecticut can provide more cost-effective, efficient, and reliable transportation.

The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Aging, Human Services, Transportation, and Veterans' Affairs committees by January 1, 2019. It terminates on that date, or the date it submits the report, whichever is later ([SA 18-3](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Training Facilities in Niantic and Windsor Locks***

A new law changes the name of the state military training facility in Niantic from “Camp Niantic” to “Camp Nett at Niantic” in honor of Colonel Robert B. Nett. The new law also names the state military training facility in Windsor Locks “Camp Hartell” in honor of First Lieutenant Lee R. Hartell. Colonel Robert B. Nett and First Lieutenant Lee R. Hartell are former National Guard members and Congressional Medal of Honor recipients ([PA 18-21](#), effective March 25, 2019).

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