
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 801

AN ACT EXPANDING CERTAIN VETERANS' ACCESS TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

SUMMARY

To the extent allowed by federal law, this bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner, when determining income eligibility for the state's Medicare savings, medical assistance, and energy assistance programs, to disregard all non-service-connected pension benefits granted to veterans or their surviving spouses. Current law only requires the commissioner to disregard federal Aid and Attendance pension benefits. The bill specifically includes federal basic pension and Housebound benefits (see BACKGROUND) as required income disregards.

Under the bill, the DSS income disregards also apply to the following programs:

1. Medicaid,
2. State Administered General Assistance,
3. Medicare Savings Program,
4. Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders,
5. State Supplement Program, and
6. fuel and weatherization assistance.

Current law allows the commissioner to seek approval of an amendment to the State Medicaid Plan or a waiver from federal law to exempt Aid and Attendance pension benefits from income eligibility criteria. The bill allows him to seek such an exemption for all non-service connected pension benefits as unreimbursed medical expenses.

The bill also makes conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, and applicable to all applications for assistance filed on or after that date.

BACKGROUND

Aid and Attendance

The Aid and Attendance monthly pension amount may be added to a veteran's monthly pension if the veteran needs aid to perform personal everyday living functions, is bedridden or in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity, or has specific limited eyesight.

Housebound Benefit

This increased monthly pension amount may be added to a veteran's monthly pension if he or she is substantially confined to his or her immediate premises due to permanent disability.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 16 Nay 0 (03/12/2019)