



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 27**

January Session, 2019

House Bill No. 7064

*House of Representatives, March 7, 2019*

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs reported through REP. BORER, D. of the 115th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVES.***

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 27-135 of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*  
3 *October 1, 2019*):

4 (b) (1) Any city or town that has not established its own local  
5 veterans' advisory committee separate from one or more other cities or  
6 towns pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and does not otherwise  
7 provide funding for a veterans' service officer shall designate (A) a city  
8 or town employee, or (B) a volunteer who is a resident of such city or  
9 town, and (i) is a veteran, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103,  
10 or (ii) has practical experience handling veterans' issues, to serve as a  
11 [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative in  
12 such city or town. The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall  
13 annually send to the chief executive officer of any such city or town an  
14 electronic notification of such chief executive officer's duty to so

15 designate a city or town employee or volunteer in accordance with this  
16 subsection. Such chief executive officer shall, not later than thirty days  
17 after receipt of such notification, submit to the Office of Advocacy and  
18 Assistance, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as  
19 amended by this act, the name and electronic mail address of the city  
20 or town employee or volunteer so designated. As used in this  
21 subdivision, "chief executive officer" means the officer described in  
22 section 7-193.

23 (2) [Any city or town employee designated as a veterans' service  
24 contact person] Each municipal veterans' representative shall carry out  
25 the duties described in subsection (a) of this section and shall complete  
26 a training course conducted by the Office of Advocacy and Assistance,  
27 as described in subdivision (3) of subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as  
28 amended by this act, or attend a training session conducted by the  
29 manager of said office, as described in subparagraph (A) of  
30 subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of said section. [Each employee so  
31 designated prior to July 1, 2016, shall complete such training course  
32 prior to January 1, 2017. Each employee so] Each municipal veterans'  
33 representative designated on or after [July 1, 2016] October 1, 2019,  
34 shall complete such training course not later than one year after the  
35 date of such designation. Upon completion of such training course, a  
36 [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative  
37 may thereafter receive electronically any new or updated training  
38 information from the Office of Advocacy and Assistance and shall not  
39 be required to complete any other such training course.

40 Sec. 2. Subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of subsection (b) of section  
41 27-102l of the general statutes are repealed and the following is  
42 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2019*):

43 (b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a manager to administer an  
44 Office of Advocacy and Assistance for the aid and benefit of veterans  
45 and their spouses, eligible dependents and family members. The office  
46 shall have a staff of not less than eight men and women, including six  
47 veterans' service officers, and clerical personnel. The manager and

48 veterans' service officers shall be veterans, as defined in subsection (a)  
49 of section 27-103, or veterans who were awarded the armed forces  
50 expeditionary medal for service by the armed forces.

51 (2) (A) The manager shall develop a training module on assisting  
52 and serving women veterans with regard to state or federal services or  
53 benefits and identifying and advising such veterans of community or  
54 nonprofit programs focused on assisting and serving such veterans.  
55 The manager shall hold and provide instruction for an annual training  
56 session, in accordance with such module, to each veterans' [services]  
57 service officer and any [veterans' service contact person] municipal  
58 veterans' representative, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-  
59 135, as amended by this act, or representative from an Operation  
60 Academic Support for Incoming Service Members center at a public  
61 institution of higher education in this state.

62 (B) At least one of the veterans' service officers shall be a woman  
63 having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans,  
64 who shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective  
65 upon the next opening of a veterans' service officer position occurring  
66 on or after July 1, 2010, at least two of the veterans' service officers  
67 shall be individuals having bilingual proficiency in English and  
68 Spanish, within existing authorized positions. Each veterans' service  
69 officer shall (i) successfully complete a course in veterans' benefits not  
70 later than one year after commencement of employment, (ii) attend the  
71 training session described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, and  
72 (iii) be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the state.

73 (3) The office staff shall, at least twice annually, conduct a training  
74 course for any [city or town employee designated a veterans' service  
75 contact person pursuant to subsection (b) of section 27-135] municipal  
76 veterans' representative. The office staff shall include in such training  
77 course a summary of state and federal services and benefits, the duties  
78 to be carried out by each [veterans' service contact person] municipal  
79 veterans' representative, as described in subsection (a) of section 27-  
80 135, and any assistance the office staff may provide to any [veterans'

81 service contact person] municipal veterans' representative related to  
82 such duties.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2019</i>	27-135(b)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2019</i>	27-1021(b)(1) to (3)

**VA**      *Joint Favorable*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:**

Municipalities	Effect	FY 20 \$	FY 21 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Savings	Less than \$1,000	Less than \$1,000

**Explanation**

The bill results in a potential savings, expected to be less than \$1,000 annually, to municipalities by allowing them to appoint volunteers, rather than employees, as municipal veterans' service contacts.

Any savings would occur if, for example, such municipalities were currently providing paid leave or mileage reimbursement for an employee to attend required training seminars.

**The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 7064****AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVES.****SUMMARY**

Under current law, any city or town that does not have a local veterans' advisory committee (see BACKGROUND) and does not provide funding for a veterans' service officer must designate a city or town employee to serve as a veterans' service contact person. This bill substitutes the term "municipal veterans' representative" for the term "veterans' service contact person," allows volunteers to serve in this position, and subjects them to all the existing training requirements. By law, the Office of Advocacy and Assistance conducts required trainings at least two times per year.

Under the bill, a volunteer designated as the municipal veterans' representative must (1) be a resident of the city or town and (2) be a veteran or have practical experience handling veterans' issues.

The bill also makes conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

**BACKGROUND*****Veterans' Advisory Committee***

By law, any city or town may establish a local veterans' advisory committee to, among other things:

1. coordinate reemployment, education, rehabilitation, and adjustment to peacetime living for veterans and their dependents;
2. cooperate with all national, state, and local government, and

private agencies to secure services and benefits for veterans and their dependents; and

3. encourage and coordinate vocational training services for veterans (CGS § 27-135(a)).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 16 Nay 0 (02/19/2019)