

Veterans' Affairs Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-777

Title: AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF VETERANS' TAX ABATEMENTS.

Vote Date: 3/12/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/14/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Veterans' Affairs Committee
Sen. Catherine A. Osten
Sen. Saud Anwar

REASONS FOR BILL:

As written, the bill directs the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study to determine if the tax abatements currently offered to Connecticut veterans should be increased. The Veterans' Affairs Committee has received numerous bills seeking to afford veterans additional tax abatements, and a comprehensive study of the current state of tax abatements would be a useful tool to have when considering such legislation.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed for S.B. No. 777

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Catherine A. Osten, Senator, Connecticut General Assembly](#): Senator Osten testified that after talking to veterans in her district, she believes that a study is necessary to determine whether eligible veterans are receiving the full value of the local tax exemption benefits as they were originally intended to be. Senator Osten also included a response from the Office of Legislative Research concerning the comparative tax relief eligible to a wartime veteran and a volunteer first responder, demonstrating that the first responder was eligible for a greater tax deduction than a wartime veteran.

[Daniel C. Thurston, Chairman, Connecticut Veterans and Military Coalition](#): Mr. Thurston questioned the need for such a study, stating that the original statutes that granted property

tax deductions for veterans were enacted following the Second World War, and that a car today costs more than a house did in 1955. Mr. Thurston contended that a taxpayer funded study was an unproductive use of funds at a time when the state needs to minimize expenses, and that the legislation should move forward with the recommended abatements proportionally adjusted to the current cost of homes in Connecticut.

[K. Robert Lewis, Chairman, the American Legion Department of Connecticut Legislative Committee](#): Mr. Lewis testified that property tax abatements are helpful for veterans, and that the American Legion supports such a study. Mr. Lewis noted however that the American Legion would refrain from commenting further until the results of the study were available.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Randy Collins, Advocacy Manager, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities](#): Mr. Collins testified that the CCM would support a comprehensive study of tax abatements provided the study included a cost benefit analysis of the existing abatements, but that the CCM opposes S.B. No. 777 as currently proposed. Mr. Collins suggested that a regressive property tax system might be a better solution, as it would provide tax relief for all, not for some by shifting the burden to others.

Reported by: Benjamin S. Watson, Asst. Clerk Date: March 18th, 2019