

Veterans' Affairs Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7244

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR VETERANS

Title: HAVING DISABILITY RATINGS.

Vote Date: 3/12/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/7/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Veterans' Affairs Committee
Sen. Saud Anwar

REASONS FOR BILL:

The State of Connecticut offers property tax exemptions for disabled veterans through municipalities which are then reimbursed through the Office of Policy and Management. Over the years, many have mentioned that the benefit, while appreciated, has not kept up with the rate of inflation from when it was originally initiated and needs to be increased. The exemption amount scales from \$1500 with a federal Department of Veterans' Affairs rating of 10% up to a maximum of \$3000 for those with a rating of 75% or more. This bill would increase the amounts offered by \$500 in each tier. Additionally, it would require the family of a deceased veteran to submit a death certificate in order to continue to receive the exemption as a spouse or minor child.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed for H.B. No. 7244

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Ron Napoli, Representative, Connecticut General Assembly](#): Representative Napoli testified that while H.B. No. 7244 would greatly help disabled veterans and their families, the committee should also consider adding Gold Star families to those eligible for property tax exemptions.

[Robin Green, Representative, Connecticut General Assembly](#): Representative Green testified that H.B. No. 7244 would help reduce the financial burden on disabled veterans, and that the provision allowing for the veteran's spouse to continue being eligible for the exemption after the veteran's passing was of special importance.

[John R. Fox, Commander, VFW Post 1926](#): Mr. Fox stated his support for the bill, but urged the committee to greatly increase the exemptions offered by abandoning dollar figures for percentages that correspond with the veteran's disability rating.

[Christopher Angeloni, Disabled Veteran](#): Mr. Angeloni offered his support for the bill, but suggested that the committee consider expanding the exemptions, taking into account factors like the cost of living, the housing market, and inflation. Mr. Angeloni also encouraged the committee to amend the bill to offer exemptions in percentages, rather than in fixed amounts.

[Joseph P. Nolan](#): Mr. Nolan, a Waterbury resident and Gold Star father, stated his support for H.B. No. 7244, but strongly encouraged the committee to amend the bill to include Gold Star families among those eligible for exemptions.

[Eric Garcia](#): Mr. Garcia testified that the bill would help alleviate the burden on veterans, but cautioned the committee that in order to have a 100% disability rating the individual needs to be entirely unable to work, meaning that, for example, amputees do not necessarily qualify for 100% disability status.

[Joshua Maurer](#): Mr. Maurer stated that H.B. No. 7244 is a step in the right direction, but not nearly sufficient, and that a percentage-based exemption corresponding to a veteran's disability rating would be more appropriate.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Randy Collins, Advocacy Manager, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities](#): Mr. Collins explained the CCM's opposition to H.B. No. 7244, stating that it would constitute an unfunded mandate on municipalities and would place an increased burden on taxpayers and local businesses. Mr. Collins suggested that the committee could instead look into a regressive property tax system, rather than exemptions based on something other than a person's ability to pay.

[Thomas C. Flowers, Commander, the American Legion Department of Connecticut](#): Mr. Flowers testified that the American Legion Department of Connecticut and its 18,000 members oppose H.B. No. 7244 as written, as it does too little to ease the tax burden on disabled veterans. Commander Flowers elaborated, saying that the American Legion Department of Connecticut believes that a 100% disability rating should receive 100% property tax exemption, and that the exemptions for all veterans should be expressed in percentages, rather than fixed amounts.

Reported by: Benjamin S. Watson, Asst. Clerk Date: March 15th, 2019