



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

**REPRESENTATIVE KATHLEEN M. McCARTY**  
THIRTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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**RANKING MEMBER**  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

February 23, 2021 \* 9:00am \* Zoom

**Testimony *in support* of Raised SB 917 AN ACT EXEMPTING VETERANS' FEDERAL PENSION BENEFITS FROM INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. and Raised HB 6482 AN ACT EXCLUDING FEDERAL VETERANS' BENEFITS FROM INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.**

Dear Chairmen Cabrera and Boyd, Ranking Members Cicarella and Vail, and distinguished members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee:

Thank you very much for adding **Raised SB 917 AN ACT EXEMPTING VETERANS' FEDERAL PENSION BENEFITS FROM INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS** and **Raised HB 6482 AN ACT EXCLUDING FEDERAL VETERANS' BENEFITS FROM INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**, on the public hearing agenda today and for the opportunity to submit testimony to you in strong support of these important bills. I submitted this session **Proposed HB 5146 AN ACT EXPANDING VETERANS' ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**. The intent of my proposal is the same as these two bills on today's public hearing agenda.

If enacted, **SB 917** and **HB 6482** will protect veterans who use federal benefits and who should be eligible for various state assistance programs from losing their state benefits. Currently, veterans who accept certain Federal program benefits such as "Aid and Attendance" have the potential of losing the benefit of other state assistance programs if their income eligibility status is deemed too high by the Department of Social Services.

The Department of Social Services when determining income eligibility for state assistance programs such as Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders Waiver Services, and Medicare Services considers federal pensions benefits like "Aid and Attendance" as income and not as a medical reimbursement. This practice has been detrimental to offering a full array of services to our veterans. It is my understanding that other states exclude all veterans' pension benefits from income when determining eligibility for public assistance programs.

One of my constituents whose father was a World War II veteran and who was an outstanding community member lost his Home Care services due to this unfair practice. I know firsthand the anguish and pain that the loss of the Home Care services caused this family.

In my opinion, veterans who have given so much of themselves and who have served their country and community selflessly should be entitled to receive all veterans' benefits both federal and statewide without the fear of losing the highest quality of healthcare and personal choice.

It is my hope that the Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Department of Social Services can work together to find a satisfactory solution to this eligibility issue and to protect our veterans and their families.

Thank you again for your consideration and support of Raised **SB No. 917** and **HB No. 6482**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen M. McCarty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Kathleen M. McCarty  
State Representative, 38<sup>th</sup> District  
*Waterford, Montville*