



*Written Testimony before the Veterans Affairs Committee  
Submitted by the Department of Social Services  
February 23, 2021*

**H.B. 6482 AN ACT EXCLUDING FEDERAL VETERANS' BENEFITS FROM INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written remarks on H.B. 6482.

While the Department of Social Services appreciates the intent of this bill, it would result in additional expenditures not contemplated in the Governor's proposed budget. Currently, under the existing statute, the Department is required to disregard federal Aid and Attendance pension benefits for the purpose of determining eligibility for a majority of the programs administered by the Department. This bill would require the Department to disregard *any* federal benefit granted to a veteran or the surviving spouse of such veteran for the purposes of determining eligibility.

The expansion of the disregard from federal Aid and Attendance pension benefits to any federal benefit issued to a veteran or surviving spouse of a veteran would increase the number of eligible individuals and program expenditures. As the Governor's budget does not contemplate these additional expenditures, the Department cannot support this proposal.

**S.B. 917 AN ACT EXEMPTING VETERANS' FEDERAL PENSION BENEFITS FROM INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services to disregard any federal pension benefits issued by the federal government to a veteran for the purposes of determining eligibility for the majority of the programs administered by the Department. This new pension disregard would be in addition to the Aid and Attendance pension disregard currently afforded by the Department.

If the Department were to disregard the income from all pensions, it would result in increased eligibility, increased caseloads, and an increase in expenditures. While the Department appreciates the intent of this bill, the required funds for such increases are not in place nor are they included in the Governor's proposed budget. As a result, the Department cannot support this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written remarks on S.B. 917.