

Veterans' Affairs Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-338

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF MUNICIPAL VETERANS SERVICES.

Vote Date: 3/15/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/8/2022

File No.: 186

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Veterans' Affairs Committee
Rep. Kurt Vail, 52nd Dist.
Rep. Bill Buckbee, 67th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would require the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of municipal veterans' services and report such findings to the Veterans' Affairs Committee. The results of such study would be used to identify areas for improvement of such services.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Commissioner Thomas Saadi, Department of Veterans' Affairs:](#) "the DVA appreciated the good intentions behind this bill as we recognize, as with many programs, that periodic updates can be made to improve the delivery of benefits and services..... That said, the DVA does not have the staff or funds to hire additional staff to implement the provisions of this bill.....This would be a highly involved project requiring at the least an additional fulltime analyst position and a fulltime administrative support position with the related salary appropriation. However, as this is a time limited project creating such permanent fulltime positions may not be the most efficient approach and instead the DVA could hire a consulting firm."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

1. [Diane Nadeau, Executive Director, Eastern Connecticut Veterans Community Center](#)
"For those municipal veterans representatives that are currently actively working with veterans, it is imperative that they receive proper training and updates from the VA so that they can deliver the best possible service to their communities. We believe this study will

provide the VA with information that can be used as a basis for improved communication and interaction with each municipal veteran's representative."

2. [James Amaro, Chairman, Veterans Advisory Committee \(Town of Manchester\)](#)

"I am in support of this bill, due to the fact that, such study would identify those facts that we already know and how to address them, which are municipalities are short and limited on veteran services, and lack the VA updates and training."

3. [Ryan Biggs, Lieutenant Junior Grade, United States Navy Reserves](#)

"For those municipal veteran's representatives that are currently working with veteran's, it is imperative that they receive proper training and updates from the VA so that they can deliver the best possible service to their communities. We believe this study will provide the VA with information that can be used as a basis for improved communication and interaction with each municipal veteran's representative."

4. [Brian Burrige, Veterans Representative, Town of East Lyme:](#) " My experiences have resulted in specific suggestions that I feel need to be considered in a study of veteran's services provided by municipalities and the state of Connecticut."

- Funding should be allocated to municipal representatives for the printing, distribution and mailing of printed material to veteran households with an introduction of services for veterans in the area.
- The CT Veterans App is a most useful tool for veterans. This app needs to be updated regularly and its use more widely encouraged, especially for veterans from PTSD.
- Connecticut Veterans Affairs also needs to create a website for veterans. This website should include VA information, non-profit information, a schedule of events and points of contact that would make veterans aware of the benefits that are available.
- Connecticut Veterans Affairs also needs to actively distribute information in the same manner in which they have distributed updates about COVID-19.
- Connecticut Veterans Affairs needs to reinstate the annual training for municipal veteran representatives.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[David Godbout](#), constituent: expressed opposition to all bills under consideration by the committee.

Reported by: Glenn Prushinski

Date: 3/22/2022