



House of Representatives

File No. 674

General Assembly

February Session, 2022

(Reprint of File No. 170)

Substitute House Bill No. 5367
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
April 27, 2022

AN ACT CONCERNING MOTOR VEHICLE MARKER PLATES FOR CERTAIN VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS, MUNICIPAL VETERANS SERVICES, VETERANS-RELATED PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AND TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO VETERANS' AND MILITARY AFFAIRS STATUTES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 14-20d of the 2022
2 supplement to the general statutes are repealed and the following is
3 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

4 (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran", [means any person (1)
5 honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions
6 from active service in, the armed forces, or (2) with a qualifying
7 condition, as defined in section 27-103, who has received a discharge
8 other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active service in the armed
9 forces, and "period of war" and] "armed forces" and "period of war" have
10 the same meanings as provided in section 27-103, as amended by this

11 act.

12 (b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall, at the request of any
13 veteran or member of the armed forces who received a campaign medal,
14 issue special registration marker plates to indicate service during a
15 period of war. Such plates shall bear the words "(Name of War) Veteran"
16 and shall be designed in consultation with the Commissioner of
17 [Veteran] Veterans Affairs. The plates shall expire and be renewed as
18 provided in section 14-22. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall
19 charge a fee for such plates, which fee shall cover the entire cost of
20 making such plates and shall be in addition to the fee for registration of
21 such motor vehicle. No use shall be made of such plates except as official
22 registration marker plates.

23 Sec. 2. Subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of section 27-103 of the 2022
24 supplement to the general statutes are repealed and the following is
25 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

26 (a) As used in the general statutes, except chapter 504, and except as
27 otherwise provided: (1) "Armed forces" means the United States Army,
28 Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force and any reserve
29 component thereof, including the Connecticut National Guard
30 performing duty as provided in Title 32 of the United States Code, as
31 amended from time to time; (2) "veteran" means any person honorably
32 discharged from, released under honorable conditions from or released
33 with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying condition
34 from, active service in, the armed forces; (3) "service in time of war"
35 means service of ninety or more cumulative days during a period of war
36 unless separated from service earlier because of an injury incurred or
37 aggravated in the line of duty or a service-connected disability rated by
38 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, except that if the
39 period of war lasted less than ninety days, "service in time of war"
40 means service for the entire period of war unless separated because of
41 any such injury or disability; (4) "period of war" has the same meaning
42 as provided in 38 USC 101, as amended from time to time, except that
43 the "Vietnam Era" means the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and

44 ending on July 1, 1975, in all cases; and "period of war" shall include
45 service while engaged in combat or a combat support role in Lebanon,
46 July 1, 1958, to November 1, 1958, or September 29, 1982, to March 30,
47 1984; Grenada, October 25, 1983, to December 15, 1983; Operation
48 Earnest Will, involving the escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers flying the
49 United States flag in the Persian Gulf, July 24, 1987, to August 1, 1990;
50 [and] Panama, December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; Afghanistan,
51 October 24, 2001, to August 30, 2021; and Iraq, March 19, 2003, to
52 December 31, 2011, or June 1, 2014, to December 9, 2021, and shall
53 include service during such periods with the armed forces of any
54 government associated with the United States; and (5) "qualifying
55 condition" means (A) a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder or
56 traumatic brain injury made by an individual licensed to provide health
57 care services at a United States Department of Veterans Affairs facility,
58 (B) an experience of military sexual trauma, as described in 38 USC
59 1720D, as amended from time to time, disclosed to an individual
60 licensed to provide health care services at a United States Department
61 of Veterans Affairs facility, or (C) a determination that sexual
62 orientation, gender identity or gender expression was more likely than
63 not the primary reason for an other than honorable discharge, as
64 determined in accordance with subsections (c) and (d) of this section.

65 (b) As used in this part, "Veterans Residential Services facility" means
66 the Veterans Residential Services facility in Rocky Hill maintained by
67 the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides temporary and other
68 supported residential services for qualifying veterans; "long-term care
69 facility" means a facility that has been federally certified as a skilled
70 nursing facility or intermediate care facility; "Healthcare Center" means
71 the long-term care facility in Rocky Hill maintained by the Department
72 of Veterans Affairs; "veteran" means any veteran, as defined in
73 subsection (a) of this section, who is a resident of this state; "eligible
74 dependent" means any parent, wife or husband, or child of a veteran
75 who has no adequate means of support; and "eligible family member"
76 means any parent, brother or sister, wife or husband, or child or children
77 under eighteen years of age, of any veteran whose cooperation in the

78 program is integral to the treatment of the veteran.

79 (c) Not later than October 1, 2021, the Commissioner of Veterans
80 Affairs shall establish a Qualifying Review Board, which shall review
81 applications of veterans submitted under subsection (d) of this section.
82 Said board shall be part of the Executive Department and shall consist
83 of five voting members who, by education or experience, shall be
84 knowledgeable of veterans benefits and programs and who shall have a
85 demonstrated interest in the concerns of veterans. A majority of the
86 members of the board shall be veterans.

87 (1) The membership of the board shall consist of the following
88 members:

89 (A) One member appointed by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs
90 in consultation with the chairperson of the Board of Trustees for the
91 Department of Veterans Affairs, [Board of Trustees,] who shall be a
92 member of said board;

93 (B) The manager of the Office of Advocacy and Assistance within the
94 Department of Veterans Affairs, [Office of Advocacy and Assistance,] or
95 the manager's designee; and

96 (C) Three members appointed by the Commissioner of Veterans
97 Affairs.

98 (2) All initial appointments to the board shall be made not later than
99 December 1, 2021, and shall terminate on November [31] 30, 2023, or
100 November [31] 30, 2024, as applicable, regardless of when the initial
101 appointment was made. Any member of the board may serve more than
102 one term.

103 (3) Members first appointed shall have the following terms: (A) The
104 member of the Board of Trustees for the Department of Veterans Affairs
105 [Board of Trustees] and the manager of the Office of Advocacy and
106 Assistance within the Department of Veterans Affairs, [Office of
107 Advocacy and Assistance,] or the manager's designee, shall initially

108 serve a term of three years, and (B) the three members appointed by the
109 Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall initially serve a term of two
110 years. Members shall serve a term of four years thereafter. Members
111 shall continue to serve until their successors are appointed.

112 (4) Any vacancy shall be filled by the Commissioner of Veterans
113 Affairs. Any vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be
114 filled for the balance of the unexpired term.

115 (5) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of section 4-9a,
116 the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall select the chairperson of the
117 board from among the members of the board. Such chairperson shall
118 schedule the first meeting of the board, which shall be held not later
119 than January 1, 2022.

120 (6) A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum for the
121 transaction of any business.

122 (7) The members of the board shall serve without compensation.

123 (8) The board shall meet at least monthly or as often as deemed
124 necessary by the chairperson based on the number of applications
125 pending before the board.

126 Sec. 3. Section 27-118 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes
127 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
128 *October 1, 2022*):

129 (a) When any veteran or member, as those terms are defined in
130 subsection [(e)] (g) of this section, dies, not having sufficient estate to
131 pay the necessary expenses of the veteran's or member's last sickness
132 and funeral expenses, as determined by the [commissioner]
133 Commissioner of Veterans Affairs after consultation with the probate
134 court for the district in which the veteran or member resided, the state
135 shall pay the sum of one thousand eight hundred dollars toward such
136 funeral expenses.

137 (b) Burial shall be in [some] a cemetery or plot not used exclusively

138 for the burial of the pauper dead.

139 (c) No amount shall be paid for funeral expenses unless claim therefor
140 is made [within one year from] not later than one year after the date of
141 death, except that in cases of death occurring abroad [,] such claim may
142 be made within one year after the remains of [such] the veteran or
143 member have been interred in this country. No provision of this section
144 shall prevent the payment of the sum under subsection (a) of this section
145 for funeral expenses on account of the burial of [such] the veteran or
146 member being made outside the limits of this state.

147 (d) Upon satisfactory proof to the commissioner, by the person who
148 has paid or provided for the funeral expenses [to the commissioner] of
149 a deceased veteran, of the identity of the [deceased] veteran, the time
150 and place of the [deceased's] veteran's death and burial and the
151 approval thereof by the commissioner, the sum under subsection (a) of
152 this section shall be paid by the Comptroller to [the] such person who
153 has paid or provided for the funeral expenses.

154 (e) (1) Upon satisfactory proof to the commissioner, by the person
155 who has paid or provided for the funeral [or burial expense to the
156 commissioner] expenses of a deceased member, of the identity of the
157 [deceased] member, the time and place of the [deceased] member's
158 death and burial and the approval thereof by the commissioner, the sum
159 [of one thousand eight hundred dollars] under subsection (a) of this
160 section shall be paid by the Comptroller to the person who has paid or
161 provided for the funeral [or burial expense, or upon assignment by such
162 person, to the funeral director who has provided the funeral] expenses.

163 (2) The person who has paid or provided for the funeral [or burial
164 expense] expenses of a deceased member shall provide to the
165 commissioner (A) an affidavit stating (i) when the [deceased] member
166 served, (ii) where the [deceased] member served, (iii) the unit in which
167 the [deceased] member served, and (iv) the capacity in which the
168 [deceased] member served; (B) any available corroborating witness
169 affidavits; (C) any available official documentation of service; and (D)

170 any other documents supporting the affidavit.

171 (f) Whenever the Comptroller has lawfully paid any sum toward the
172 funeral expenses of any deceased veteran or member and it afterwards
173 appears that the [deceased] veteran or member left any estate, the
174 Comptroller may present a claim on behalf of the state against the estate
175 of such [deceased] veteran or member for the sum so paid, and the claim
176 shall be a preferred claim against such estate and shall be paid to the
177 Treasurer, [of the state.] The commissioner, upon the advice of the
178 Attorney General, may make application for administration upon the
179 estate of any such [deceased] veteran or member if no other person
180 authorized by law makes such application within sixty days after such
181 payment has been made by the Comptroller.

182 (g) As used in this section, (1) "veteran" has the same meaning as
183 provided in section 27-103, as amended by this act, (2) "member" means
184 any person who served in the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units,
185 which units served in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of
186 Laos during the Vietnam War, and (3) "funeral expenses" means (A) the
187 cash advances paid by the funeral director and the cost of funeral
188 services and funeral merchandise, (B) the cost of burial, cremation or
189 disposition, and (C) the cost of publication of an obituary. "Funeral
190 merchandise" includes, but is not limited to, alternative containers,
191 caskets, urns, vaults and outer burial containers.

192 Sec. 4. Section 27-82 of the general statutes is repealed and the
193 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

194 The [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs is authorized
195 to administer the separation allowances provided for by this chapter
196 and enforce the provisions relating thereto. The commissioner shall
197 determine the amount of such separation allowances to be paid and
198 shall certify to the Comptroller the amounts to be paid monthly. The
199 Comptroller shall draw his orders on the Treasurer in payment thereof.
200 The commissioner may apply the provisions of sections 27-80 to 27-85,
201 inclusive, to any person who enters the military or naval service of the

202 United States through the provisions of any system of selective draft
203 adopted by the federal government.

204 Sec. 5. Section 27-86 of the general statutes is repealed and the
205 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

206 Whenever the provisions of this chapter relating to separation
207 allowances become operative through the calling of the National Guard
208 or other forces into active service, the [commissioner] Commissioner of
209 Veterans Affairs shall pay such allowances as are to be paid out of any
210 funds which the state may have available for such purposes and, if no
211 funds are available, the State Treasurer is authorized to borrow, in the
212 name of the state, on notes, such funds as are necessary to administer
213 such provisions. In either case said commissioner shall certify to the
214 General Assembly at its next regular session the amount expended, or,
215 if such provisions are at that time operative, shall certify to the amount
216 expended under them up to and including the first Wednesday of
217 December preceding the convening of the General Assembly, and in
218 either case the General Assembly shall appropriate sufficient funds to
219 cover such expenditures; and, in the event of the existence of
220 circumstances making such provisions still operative, the General
221 Assembly shall take the necessary steps to provide for the requisite
222 expense.

223 Sec. 6. Section 27-102m of the general statutes is repealed and the
224 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

225 The [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, in his or her
226 discretion, shall investigate all complaints made to the commissioner
227 with respect to the conduct or treatment of veterans, their spouses, or
228 eligible dependents and family members receiving services under this
229 chapter, or any program administered by the [department] Department
230 of Veterans Affairs and for such purpose shall have power to compel
231 the attendance of witnesses under oath. If upon the completion of such
232 investigation, the commissioner finds that any veteran, spouse or
233 eligible dependent has not received proper care or has been [ill treated]

234 ill-treated or abused by any officer or employee, the commissioner shall,
235 in his or her discretion, cause the offender to be prosecuted, disciplined
236 or dismissed and shall order such remedial action as the commissioner
237 deems necessary to eliminate the condition. If upon such investigation,
238 the commissioner finds that no adequate grounds exist for such
239 complaint, the commissioner shall certify that fact to the officer or
240 employee involved and cause such officer's or employee's record to be
241 cleared of the incident.

242 Sec. 7. Section 27-106 of the general statutes is repealed and the
243 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

244 (a) The [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall adopt
245 and enforce such rules as may be necessary to ensure order, enforce
246 discipline and preserve the health and ensure the comfort of the
247 residents in the Veterans Residential Services facility and patients in the
248 Healthcare Center, and shall discipline or dismiss any officer or resident
249 of said facility or patient in the Healthcare Center who violates such
250 rules. The commissioner shall (1) appoint, subject to the provisions of
251 chapter 67, such officers and employees as are necessary for the
252 administration of the affairs of said facility and the Healthcare Center,
253 (2) prescribe the relative rank, if any, of such officers and employees,
254 and (3) commission each such officer, who shall wear such uniform, if
255 any, as is prescribed by the commissioner.

256 (b) The chief fiscal officer shall submit a semiannual plain language
257 report to each resident of the Veterans Residential Services facility and
258 patient of the Healthcare Center detailing the manner in which the
259 institutional general welfare fund was used over the previous six
260 months to directly benefit veterans, said facility or the Healthcare
261 Center. Such report shall include a prominently displayed statement
262 encouraging residents to submit suggestions for projects to be funded
263 by the institutional general welfare fund and a form for such
264 submissions.

265 (c) The chief fiscal officer shall submit an itemized list of expenditures

266 made from the institutional general welfare fund to the commissioner
267 at intervals not greater than two months. Such list shall include all such
268 expenditures made during the two-month period preceding its
269 submission. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 4-56, the
270 commissioner shall prescribe procedures to limit and specify the uses
271 for which expenditures may be made from the institutional general
272 welfare fund so that only expenditures that, in the opinion of the
273 commissioner and the [board of trustees] Board of Trustees for the
274 [department] Department of Veterans Affairs appointed pursuant to
275 section 27-102n, directly benefit veterans, the Veterans Residential
276 Services facility or the Healthcare Center are permitted.

277 (d) In addition to the estimate of expenditure requirements required
278 under section 4-77, the commissioner shall submit an accounting of all
279 planned expenditures for the next fiscal year from the institutional
280 general welfare fund to the joint standing committee of the General
281 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and
282 the budgets of state agencies at the time such estimate is submitted.

283 (e) The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall annually hold suitable
284 exercises in the Veterans Residential Services facility on November
285 eleventh recognizing resident veterans for their military service.

286 Sec. 8. Section 27-109 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes
287 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
288 *October 1, 2022*):

289 Any hospital, upon request of the [commissioner] Commissioner of
290 Veterans Affairs, shall furnish any veteran, determined by the
291 commissioner to be entitled to admission thereto, necessary food,
292 clothing, care and treatment therein at the expense of the state, unless
293 other funds or means of payment are available, and such veteran shall
294 have preference for admission into such hospital. As used in this section,
295 "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, as
296 amended by this act.

297 Sec. 9. Section 27-119a of the general statutes is repealed and the

298 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

299 The [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall, upon
300 application made by the chief executive authority of the town, city or
301 borough wherein the deceased is buried, cause a metal marker and flag
302 holder to be placed on the grave of any person who, in time of war,
303 served in the military or naval forces of the English colonies in America,
304 prior to 1776, or who served in the military or naval forces of the United
305 States in the Revolutionary War, which grave is not so marked.

306 Sec. 10. Section 27-120 of the general statutes is repealed and the
307 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

308 If any person who, in time of war, served in the military or naval
309 forces of the English colonies in America, prior to 1776, or of the state of
310 Connecticut or in the armed forces of the United States, and was
311 credited to said colonies, state or the United States, died during such
312 service of disease or wounds, or was killed in action, died in prison or
313 was lost at sea, and whose body was never brought home for interment,
314 or who was reported missing in action and has not been heard from, the
315 [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall, upon proper
316 application, with satisfactory proof, made by the chief executive
317 authority of the municipality of which the deceased was a resident, as
318 to his identity and honorable service, cause to be erected in any cemetery
319 or public place in such municipality, at a cost to the state of not more
320 than fifty dollars, a marker or soldier's headstone, having inscribed
321 thereon the name of such person, the organization to which he
322 belonged, and the place of his death or burial or when he was reported
323 as missing in action or lost at sea.

324 Sec. 11. Section 27-121 of the general statutes is repealed and the
325 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

326 If the chief executive authority of any municipality which had as
327 residents several veterans who were killed or lost as described in section
328 27-120, as amended by this act, and to whose memory markers or
329 headstones have not already been erected, prefers a memorial stone or

330 plaque with the names of all such veterans inscribed thereon, erected in
331 a public place or cemetery in such municipality, the [commissioner]
332 Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall cause such a suitable memorial
333 to be erected in such municipality, which memorial shall be of such
334 design and material and of such cost as the commissioner determines. If
335 any municipality, organization or person contributes toward the
336 erection of such memorial, the location of the same shall be determined
337 by the commissioner and a committee of two persons appointed by the
338 municipality, organization or individuals making such contribution.
339 Any such memorial may include the names of any veterans who died or
340 were killed in action as described in [said] section 27-120, as amended
341 by this act, and whose bodies have been brought home for interment
342 whenever the municipality wherein such memorial is to be erected, or
343 any organization or person, agrees with the commissioner to share
344 proportionately the cost of erecting such memorial.

345 Sec. 12. Subsection (b) of section 27-122b of the 2022 supplement to
346 the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
347 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

348 (b) (1) Any veteran may, by letter or other communication addressed
349 to the [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, or by will,
350 request that upon his or her death his or her body be buried in a
351 veterans' cemetery established pursuant to section 27-122a, as amended
352 by this act, or (2) the spouse or other next of kin may apply to the
353 commissioner to have the body of such veteran buried in said veterans'
354 cemetery, and in either case such request shall be granted.

355 Sec. 13. Section 27-125 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes
356 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
357 *October 1, 2022*):

358 Any veteran who is a citizen of this state and who, through disability
359 or other causes incident to service in the armed forces in time of war, is
360 in need of temporary financial assistance may be provided for by the
361 [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs by a method similar

362 to that provided in section 27-82, as amended by this act, the amount
363 and continuance of such assistance to be discretionary with the
364 commissioner. The widow, widower and each child, parent, brother or
365 sister of any member of the armed forces, who died while in such active
366 service, may be assisted by the commissioner if such person or persons
367 are without sufficient means of support by reason of the death of such
368 member of the armed forces. In carrying out his or her duties under the
369 provisions of this section, the commissioner is directed to cooperate
370 with such federal agencies as may aid in securing prompt and suitable
371 treatment, care and relief of any such member of the armed forces or his
372 or her dependents. The records of the agencies of the state shall be
373 placed at the disposal of the commissioner and such agencies are
374 directed to cooperate with and to assist the commissioner in carrying
375 out his or her duties. As used in this section, "veteran" has the same
376 meaning as provided in section 27-103, as amended by this act.

377 Sec. 14. Section 27-117 of the general statutes is repealed and the
378 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

379 Any person who has in his or her possession or control any property
380 of any person applying for or receiving aid from the Soldiers, Sailors
381 and Marines Fund or the [department] Department of Veterans Affairs,
382 or who is indebted to such applicant or recipient or has knowledge of
383 any property belonging to him or her, and any officer who has control
384 of the books and accounts of any corporation which has possession or
385 control of any property belonging to any person applying for or
386 receiving such aid or is indebted to him or her, shall, upon presentation
387 by the disbursing officer thereof or any person deputized by him or her
388 of a certificate signed by him or her, stating that such applicant or
389 recipient has applied for or is receiving aid from said fund or the
390 department, make full disclosure to such disbursing officer or deputy of
391 any such property or indebtedness. Such disclosure may be obtained in
392 like manner of the property or indebtedness of any person liable for the
393 support of any such applicant or recipient.

394 Sec. 15. Subsection (c) of section 27-24 of the general statutes is

395 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
396 *1, 2022*):

397 (c) The Adjutant General shall designate either the assistant adjutant
398 general for the Connecticut Army National Guard or the assistant
399 adjutant general for the Connecticut Air National Guard to serve as
400 administrative assistant and deputy to the Adjutant General and as
401 deputy chief of staff to the Governor. Such assistant adjutant general (1)
402 shall perform all of the duties of the Adjutant General in his absence,
403 during his inability or by his direction and (2) shall devote all of his time,
404 during the office hours of the [department] Military Department, to the
405 duties of his office. The assistant adjutant general not so designated shall
406 perform such duties, consistent with his grade and position, as the
407 Adjutant General shall direct.

408 Sec. 16. Section 27-25 of the general statutes is repealed and the
409 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

410 The Adjutant General shall appoint a property and procurement
411 officer who shall be the assistant of the Adjutant General in the care of
412 all military property and who shall hold office at the pleasure of the
413 Adjutant General. He shall devote all of his time, during the office hours
414 of the [department] Military Department, to the duties of his office.

415 Sec. 17. Section 27-31 of the general statutes is repealed and the
416 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

417 The Adjutant General shall appoint such number of employees,
418 subject to the provisions of chapter 67 and section 4-40, as may be
419 required to perform adequately the duties required of the [department]
420 Military Department. Employees in the [Military Department]
421 department, not in the classified service, shall serve [during] at the
422 pleasure of the Adjutant General and shall perform such duties as may
423 be assigned to them.

424 Sec. 18. Section 27-102o of the general statutes is repealed and the
425 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

426 The Department of [Veterans'] Veterans Affairs may, subject to any
427 limitations otherwise imposed by law, receive and accept on behalf of
428 the state any funds that may be offered or that may become available
429 from federal grants or appropriations, private gifts, donations or
430 bequests, or any other source and may expend such funds for the
431 purpose of financing, in whole or in part and on behalf of the state, the
432 construction of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at
433 Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

434 Sec. 19. Section 27-102p of the general statutes is repealed and the
435 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

436 (a) Not later than July 15, 2007, and annually thereafter, each state
437 agency or municipality that provides benefits to veterans, as defined in
438 section 27-103, as amended by this act, shall submit a report to the
439 Commissioner of [Veterans'] Veterans Affairs that includes a
440 description of each type of benefit provided to veterans, the value of
441 such benefit and the number of veterans to whom such benefit was
442 provided, for the twelve-month period ending on June thirtieth of the
443 same year. The commissioner shall compile the data in such report.

444 (b) Not later than August 1, 2007, and annually thereafter, the
445 Commissioner of [Veterans'] Veterans Affairs shall submit a report of
446 the data compiled pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, for the
447 twelve-month period ending on June thirtieth of the same year, to the
448 Military Department and the joint standing committee of the General
449 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety, in
450 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a. Such report shall
451 specify the total number of veterans receiving benefits and the value of
452 such benefits by category of benefit and in total for such period.

453 Sec. 20. Subsection (c) of section 27-122a of the general statutes is
454 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
455 *1, 2022*):

456 (c) The land transferred to the commission under subsections (a) and
457 (b) of this section and not transferred to the Commissioner of Mental

458 Health and Addiction Services and the Connecticut Valley Hospital
459 shall be used by the Commissioner of [Veterans'] Veterans Affairs for
460 the establishment and maintenance of a veterans' cemetery.

461 Sec. 21. Subsection (c) of section 51-49h of the 2022 supplement to the
462 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
463 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

464 (c) For the purposes of this section: (1) "Armed forces" means the
465 United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force;
466 (2) "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, as
467 amended by this act; and (3) "military service" shall be service during
468 World War II, December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; the Korean
469 hostilities, June 27, 1950, to October 27, 1953; and the Vietnam era,
470 January 1, 1964, to July 1, 1975, and shall include service as a prisoner of
471 war.

472 Sec. 22. Subsection (a) of section 27-20 of the general statutes is
473 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
474 *1, 2022*):

475 (a) The Adjutant General shall make such returns and reports to such
476 officers as may be prescribed by the United States Department of
477 Defense in regulations pertaining to the National Guard, at such times
478 and in such form as prescribed. The Adjutant General shall (1) keep the
479 service records of all officers and enlisted personnel, (2) issue authorized
480 service medals, ribbons and documents, (3) (A) generate and maintain
481 all records and documents required by state law or regulations
482 thereunder, and (B) process requests for such records pursuant to the
483 state Freedom of Information Act, as defined in section 1-200, and (4)
484 (A) generate and maintain all records and documents required by
485 federal law or regulations thereunder, and (B) process requests for such
486 records pursuant to the federal Freedom of Information Act of 1976, 5
487 USC 552, as amended from time to time.

488 Sec. 23. Section 27-49 of the general statutes is repealed and the
489 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

490 Officers of the National Guard and naval militia shall be appointed
491 by the Governor, subject to the procedure prescribed in regulations of
492 the United States Department of Defense relating to the National Guard
493 and naval militia. The rule of seniority shall be followed when
494 practicable. Only such officers shall be commissioned in the National
495 Guard and naval militia as have successfully passed the tests and
496 examinations as to physical, moral and professional fitness prescribed
497 by the laws and regulations of the United States relating to the
498 qualifications of National Guard or naval militia officers. Officers of the
499 organized militia, as provided for in section 27-2, shall be appointed in
500 accordance with regulations approved by the Governor.

501 Sec. 24. Subsection (d) of section 1-219 of the general statutes is
502 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
503 *1, 2022*):

504 (d) The provisions of this section concerning the maintenance and
505 recording of United States Department of Defense documents shall not
506 apply to the State Library Board or the State Librarian.

507 Sec. 25. Subsection (a) of section 8-106 of the general statutes is
508 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
509 *1, 2022*):

510 (a) "Persons engaged in national defense activities" includes persons
511 in the military service of the United States; employees of the United
512 States Department of Defense; and workers engaged or to be engaged
513 in activities connected with and essential to national defense; and
514 includes the families of the aforesaid persons who are living with them.

515 Sec. 26. Subsection (b) of section 14-36h of the 2022 supplement to the
516 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
517 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

518 (b) If any person does not reside in any state, territory or possession
519 of the United States because such person is on active military duty with
520 the United States Armed Forces, and such person's home state of record

521 is Connecticut, as reflected in the records of the United States
522 Department of Defense, United States Department of Homeland
523 Security or any federal department under which the United States Coast
524 Guard operates, such person may obtain a Connecticut operator's
525 license or identity card, provided such person: (1) Does not have an
526 operator's license or identity card issued by another state, territory or
527 possession of the United States, or surrenders any such license or
528 identity card; (2) has a current APO or FPO mailing address; (3)
529 designates such person's home address as 60 State Street, Wethersfield,
530 CT 06161; and (4) meets all other requirements for obtaining an
531 operator's license or identity card in this state.

532 Sec. 27. Section 17a-453d of the general statutes is repealed and the
533 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

534 The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, in
535 collaboration with the Department of Children and Families and the
536 Department of Veterans Affairs, shall provide behavioral health
537 services, on a transitional basis, for the dependents and any member of
538 any reserve component of the armed forces of the United States who has
539 been called to active service in the armed forces of the state or the United
540 States for Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom.
541 Such transitional services shall be provided when no United States
542 Department of Defense coverage for such services is available or such
543 member is not eligible for such services through the United States
544 Department of Defense, until an approved application is received from
545 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and coverage is
546 available to such member and such member's dependents.

547 Sec. 28. Subsection (b) of section 20-327f of the general statutes is
548 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
549 *1, 2022*):

550 (b) With respect to a contract for the sale of a one-to-four family
551 residential real property, if the seller provides written notice to the
552 purchaser, prior to, or upon, entering into the contract, of the availability

553 of information concerning environmental matters from the [federal]
554 United States Environmental Protection Agency, the National Response
555 Center, the United States Department of Defense and third-party
556 providers, the seller and any real estate licensee shall be deemed to have
557 fully satisfied any duty to disclose environmental matters concerning
558 properties other than the property that is the subject of the contract.

559 Sec. 29. Subsection (b) of section 22a-337 of the general statutes is
560 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
561 *1, 2022*):

562 (b) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection is
563 designated as the shore erosion agency of the state for the purpose of
564 cooperating with the Beach Erosion Board of the United States
565 Department of Defense, as provided for in Section 2 of the "River and
566 Harbor Act" adopted by Congress and approved July 3, 1930, and
567 known as H.R. Number 11781 of the second session of the 71st Congress.
568 Said commissioner shall carry out investigations and studies of
569 conditions along the shore line, harbors, rivers and islands within the
570 territorial waters of the state in order to promote and encourage the
571 healthful recreation of its citizens and with a view to devising and
572 projecting economical and effective methods and works for preventing
573 and correcting shore erosion and damage to public and private property
574 therefrom and to prevent inundation of improved property by storms,
575 erosion and ravages of the sea.

576 Sec. 30. Section 5-224 of the general statutes is repealed and the
577 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

578 Any veteran who served in time of war, if such veteran is not eligible
579 for disability compensation or pension from the [United States] United
580 States Department of Veterans Affairs, or the spouse of such veteran
581 who by reason of such veteran's disability is unable to pursue gainful
582 employment, or the unmarried surviving spouse of such veteran, and if
583 such person has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any
584 examination held for an original appointment for the purpose of

585 establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with
586 subsection (d) of section 5-228, shall have five points added to his or her
587 earned rating. Any such veteran, or the spouse of such veteran who by
588 reason of such veteran's disability is unable to pursue gainful
589 employment, or the unmarried surviving spouse of such veteran, if such
590 person is eligible for such disability compensation or pension and if
591 such person has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any
592 such examination held for an original appointment for the purpose of
593 establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with
594 subsection (d) of section 5-228, shall have ten points added to his or her
595 earned rating. Any veteran who has served in a military action for which
596 such person received or was entitled to receive a campaign badge or
597 expeditionary medal, shall have five points added to his or her earned
598 rating if such person has attained at least the minimum earned rating on
599 any such examination held for an original appointment for the purpose
600 of establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with
601 subsection (d) of section 5-228 and such person is not otherwise eligible
602 to receive additional points pursuant to this section. Any person who is
603 a member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, as amended
604 by this act, and who is in the final year of an enlistment contract with
605 any branch of the armed forces shall have five points added to his or her
606 earned rating if such person has attained at least the minimum earned
607 rating on any such examination held for an original appointment for the
608 purpose of establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance
609 with subsection (d) of section 5-228. Names of any such persons shall be
610 placed upon the candidate lists in the order of such augmented ratings.
611 Credits shall be based upon examinations with a possible rating of one
612 hundred points.

613 Sec. 31. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
614 (1) evaluate state property tax exemptions, abatements and other relief
615 granted to veterans, (2) make recommendations concerning whether
616 any such state veterans property tax relief should be adjusted to more
617 effectively align with the intent, at the time of enactment, for such relief,
618 and (3) create a list of municipalities in the state that have enacted local

619 veterans property tax relief and specify the nature of such relief in each
620 such municipality.

621 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

622 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

623 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

624 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
625 Representatives;

626 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

627 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
628 Representatives; and

629 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

630 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
631 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
632 of the General Assembly.

633 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
634 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
635 be filled by the appointing authority.

636 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
637 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
638 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
639 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty
640 days after the effective date of this section.

641 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
642 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to military and
643 veterans' affairs shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

644 (g) Not later than January 1, 2023, the task force shall submit a report
645 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees

646 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
647 military and veterans' affairs and planning and development, in
648 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.
649 The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or
650 January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

651 Sec. 32. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than September 1, 2022, the
652 Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the joint standing
653 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
654 relating to veterans' affairs, in accordance with the provisions of section
655 11-4a of the general statutes, recommendations for improvements
656 regarding municipal veterans' representatives, as described in
657 subsection (b) of section 27-135 of the general statutes, to ensure
658 consistent, effective and efficient provision of services to veterans, as
659 defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, as amended by this act,
660 throughout the state.

661 Sec. 33. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2022*) (a) Any municipality, by vote
662 of its legislative body or, in a municipality where the legislative body is
663 a town meeting, by vote of the board of selectmen, may provide that any
664 veteran, as defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, as amended
665 by this act, whose federal adjusted gross income is fifty thousand one
666 hundred dollars or less shall be entitled to an exemption from the tax
667 imposed under chapter 203 of the general statutes on any dwelling
668 owned and occupied by such veteran as such veteran's primary
669 residence, in an amount equal to ten per cent of the assessed value of
670 such primary residence.

671 (b) (1) Any veteran who claims an exemption under subsection (a) of
672 this section shall give notice to the town clerk of the municipality in
673 which such primary residence is located that such veteran is entitled to
674 such exemption.

675 (2) Any veteran submitting a claim for such exemption shall file an
676 application, on a form prepared by the assessor of the municipality in
677 which such primary residence is located, not later than the assessment

678 date with respect to which such exemption is claimed, which
679 application shall include (A) (i) a certified copy of such veteran's
680 military discharge document, as defined in section 1-219 of the general
681 statutes, as amended by this act, or (ii) in the absence of such certified
682 copy, at least two affidavits of disinterested individuals showing that
683 the claimant is a veteran, provided the assessor may further require such
684 claimant to be examined by such assessor under oath concerning the
685 facts contained in such affidavits, and (B) a copy of such veteran's
686 federal income tax return or, in the event such a return is not filed, such
687 evidence as may be required by the assessor, for the tax year of such
688 veteran ending immediately prior to the assessment date with respect
689 to which such exemption is claimed. The town clerk of the municipality
690 in which such primary residence is located shall record the certified
691 copy or affidavits submitted pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this
692 subdivision in full and shall list the name of such veteran, and such
693 service shall be performed by such town clerk without remuneration.
694 No assessor, board of assessment appeals or other official shall allow
695 any such claim for exemption unless the certified copy or affidavits
696 specified in this subsection have been filed with the office of the town
697 clerk. Any veteran who has submitted a claim for such exemption and
698 received approval for the first time shall file for such exemption
699 biennially thereafter, subject to the provisions of subdivision (3) of this
700 subsection.

701 (3) The assessor of such municipality shall annually make a certified
702 list of all such veterans who are found to be entitled to an exemption
703 under the provisions of this section, which list shall be filed in the town
704 clerk's office and shall be prima facie evidence that any veteran whose
705 name appears on such list is entitled to such exemption, subject to the
706 provisions of subsection (c) of this section, as long as such veteran
707 continues to own and occupy the dwelling as such veteran's primary
708 residence. Such assessor may, at any time, require such veteran to
709 appear before such assessor for the purpose of furnishing additional
710 evidence, except that any veteran who, by reason of total disability, is
711 unable to so appear may furnish such assessor (A) a statement from such

712 veteran's attending physician or advanced practice registered nurse,
713 certifying that such veteran is totally disabled and unable to make a
714 personal appearance, and (B) such other evidence of total disability as
715 such assessor may deem appropriate.

716 (4) No veteran may receive an exemption under this section until
717 such veteran has proven such veteran's right to such exemption in
718 accordance with the provisions of this section, together with such
719 further proof as may be required under such provisions. Exemptions so
720 proven shall take effect on the next succeeding assessment day.

721 (c) Any veteran who has submitted an application and been
722 approved in any year for the exemption provided in subsection (a) of
723 this section shall, in the assessment year immediately following
724 approval, be presumed to qualify for such exemption. During the year
725 immediately following such approval, the assessor shall notify, in
726 writing, such veteran presumed to be qualified pursuant to this
727 subsection. If any such veteran has qualifying income in excess of the
728 maximum allowed under subsection (a) of this section, such veteran
729 shall notify the assessor on or before the next filing date of such
730 exemption and shall be denied such exemption for the assessment year
731 immediately following and for any subsequent year until such veteran
732 has reapplied and again qualified for such exemption. Any such veteran
733 who fails to notify the assessor of such disqualification shall make
734 payment to the municipality in the amount of property tax loss related
735 to such exemption improperly taken.

736 Sec. 34. Section 12-2b of the general statutes is repealed and the
737 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

738 The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall:

739 (1) In consultation with the Commissioner of Agriculture, develop
740 schedules of unit prices for property classified under sections 12-107a to
741 12-107e, inclusive, update such schedules by October 1, 1990, and every
742 five years thereafter, and make such data, studies and schedules
743 available to municipalities and the public;

744 (2) [develop] Develop regulations setting forth standards and tests
 745 for: Certifying revaluation companies and their employees, which
 746 regulations shall ensure that a revaluation company is competent in
 747 appraising and valuing property, certifying revaluation companies and
 748 their employees, requiring that a certified employee supervise all
 749 valuations performed by a revaluation company for municipalities,
 750 maintaining lists of certified revaluation companies and upon request,
 751 advising municipalities in drafting contracts with revaluation
 752 companies, and conducting investigations and withdrawing the
 753 certification of any revaluation company or employee found not to be
 754 conforming to such regulations. The regulations shall provide for the
 755 imposition of a fee payable to a testing service designated by the
 756 secretary to administer certification examinations; [and]

757 (3) [by] By himself, or by an agent whom he may appoint, inquire if
 758 all property taxes [which] that are due and collectible by each town or
 759 city not consolidated with a town, are in fact collected and paid to the
 760 treasurer thereof in the manner prescribed by law, and if accounts and
 761 records of the tax collectors and treasurers of such entities are adequate
 762 and properly kept. The secretary may hold meetings, conferences or
 763 schools for assessors, tax collectors or municipal finance officers; and

764 (4) Provide jointly with the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs a
 765 written notice annually to municipalities and veterans' organizations of
 766 the property tax exemptions that a municipality may opt to approve
 767 under chapter 203 for veterans, veterans' relatives or spouses or persons
 768 killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed
 769 forces.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2022	14-20d(a) and (b)
Sec. 2	October 1, 2022	27-103(a) to (c)
Sec. 3	October 1, 2022	27-118
Sec. 4	October 1, 2022	27-82
Sec. 5	October 1, 2022	27-86

Sec. 6	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-102m
Sec. 7	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-106
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-109
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-119a
Sec. 10	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-120
Sec. 11	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-121
Sec. 12	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-122b(b)
Sec. 13	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-125
Sec. 14	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-117
Sec. 15	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-24(c)
Sec. 16	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-25
Sec. 17	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-31
Sec. 18	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-102o
Sec. 19	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-102p
Sec. 20	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-122a(c)
Sec. 21	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	51-49h(c)
Sec. 22	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-20(a)
Sec. 23	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	27-49
Sec. 24	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	1-219(d)
Sec. 25	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	8-106(a)
Sec. 26	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	14-36h(b)
Sec. 27	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	17a-453d
Sec. 28	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	20-327f(b)
Sec. 29	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	22a-337(b)
Sec. 30	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	5-224
Sec. 31	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 32	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 33	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 34	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	12-2b

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 23 \$	FY 24 \$
Various Municipalities	Grand List Reduction	None	Potential

Explanation

The bill creates an optional property tax exemption of 10% of the assessment of a home owned by veterans that meet certain income limits.

A municipality that chose to implement this would experience a grand list reduction. At current mill rates, if every municipality chose to implement this option, the cumulative revenue loss would be an estimated \$63.5 million.

The bill requires the Office of Policy and Management and the Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide information to municipalities and veterans' organizations about property tax exemptions for which veterans are eligible. This has no fiscal impact as it is anticipated that the agencies can provide this information with existing resources.

The bill requires the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide recommendations for improvements regarding municipal veterans' representatives which does not result in a fiscal impact. The bill also establishes a task force to study veterans' property

tax exemptions. These changes have no fiscal impact.

Lastly, the bill makes several minor and technical changes to statutes relating to veterans, which has no fiscal impact.

House "A" creates an optional property tax exemption for veterans below certain income thresholds and results in the above identified fiscal impact.

The Out Years

The ongoing above identified fiscal impact will continue into the future subject to changes in municipal grand lists and mill rates.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5367 (as amended by House "A")******AN ACT CONCERNING MOTOR VEHICLE MARKER PLATES FOR CERTAIN VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS, TAX RELIEF FOR VETERANS, MUNICIPAL VETERANS SERVICES AND TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO VETERANS' AND MILITARY AFFAIRS STATUTES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill establishes a local option property tax exemption for income-qualifying veterans' primary residences. A municipality may adopt the exemption by a vote of its legislative body (or board of selectman if the legislative body is a town meeting). This tax exemption is separate from the state-mandated and local option veterans property tax exemptions under existing law (see BACKGROUND). The local option exemptions under existing law generally have a lower allowable income threshold or more restrictive eligibility requirements (e.g., wartime service or a qualifying disability) than the exemption established under the bill (§ 33).

Under the bill, the exemption (1) is available to veterans with up to \$50,100 in federal adjusted gross income (AGI) and (2) equals 10% of the assessed value of a dwelling the veteran owns and uses as a primary residence. A "veteran" is anyone who was honorably discharged, released under honorable conditions, or released with an other than honorable discharge, based on a qualifying condition, from active service in the armed forces (see BACKGROUND).

The bill also:

1. allows the motor vehicles commissioner to provide special registration marker plates to certain individual who served while engaged in a combat or combat support role in Afghanistan or Iraq (§§ 1 & 2);

2. establishes an eight-member task force to evaluate state property tax relief for veterans and make recommendations about whether there should be tax relief adjustments (§ 31);
3. requires the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary, jointly with the veterans affairs commissioner, to annually provide a written notice to municipalities and veterans' organizations informing them about the property tax exemptions that a municipality may choose to approve for veterans, veterans' relatives or spouses, or people killed in action while on active military duty with the armed forces (§ 34);
4. requires the veterans affairs commissioner to submit to the Veterans' Affairs Committee, by September 1, 2022, recommendations for improvements regarding municipal veterans' representatives to ensure the consistent, effective, and efficient provision of services (see BACKGROUND) (§ 32); and
5. makes numerous technical changes (§§ 1-30).

*House Amendment "A" (1) strikes the underlying bill's working group on veterans' property tax relief and replaces it with a similarly focused task force and (2) adds the provisions on the (a) new local option property tax exemption and (b) written notice about permissive municipal property tax exemptions for veterans and certain other individuals.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2022, except the property tax task force and municipal veterans' representative provisions are effective upon passage.

§ 33 — PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION ADMINISTRATION

Veterans may not receive the bill's local option property tax exemption until they have proven their right to the exemption consistent with the bill. Once proven, the exemption takes effect on the next succeeding assessment day.

Application

The bill requires a veteran claiming an exemption to notify the town clerk in the municipality where the residence is located that he or she is entitled to an exemption. Veterans must apply for the exemption, in a form prepared by the municipal assessor, by the assessment date. The application must include either (1) a certified copy of the veteran's military discharge document or (2) in its absence, at least two affidavits from disinterested individuals showing the applicant is a veteran (the assessor may additionally require that the applicant be examined under oath about the facts in the affidavits). It must also include the veteran's federal income tax return for the preceding tax year or, if one is not filed, other evidence the assessor requires.

Under the bill, a town clerk must record the discharge documents or affidavits in full and list the veteran's name without payment. The bill prohibits assessors, boards of assessment appeals, and other officials from allowing claims for this exemption unless the required documents are filed with the clerk. Veterans who are approved for the exemption must file for the exemption every two years.

List of Qualifying Veterans

Municipal assessors must annually create a certified list of all veterans who are found to qualify for an exemption under the bill. The list must be filed in the clerk's office and is prima facie evidence that a veteran is entitled to an exemption, so long as he or she continues to use the dwelling as his or her primary residence.

Additional Evidence and Personal Appearance

At any time, an assessor may require a veteran to appear before him or her to provide additional evidence. But any veteran who is unable to appear because of total disability may give the assessor (1) a statement from his or her physician or nurse practitioner certifying that the veteran is totally disabled and cannot make a personal appearance and (2) other evidence of total disability deemed appropriate by the assessor.

Presumption of Eligibility

Under the bill, veterans who have applied and been approved for the exemption in any year are presumed to also qualify for the exemption in the next year following approval. During that year, the assessor must give the veteran written notice that he or she is presumed to qualify. If the veteran's income exceeds \$50,100, the veteran (1) must notify the assessor by the next filing date for the exemption and (2) will be denied the exemption until he or she has applied and qualified once again. Veterans who fail to notify assessors of their disqualification must repay the municipality for its property tax loss related to the improperly taken exemption.

§§ 1 & 2 — SPECIAL REGISTRATION MARKER PLATES

This bill allows the motor vehicles commissioner to provide special registration marker plates to individuals who received a campaign medal and served while engaged in combat or in a combat support role in Afghanistan (from October 24, 2001, to August 30, 2021) or Iraq (from March 19, 2003, to December 31, 2011, and June 1, 2014, to December 9, 2021). It does so by explicitly adding these conflicts and dates to the "period of war" definition in the veterans statutes. By law, these plates have the words "(Name of War) Veteran" and the motor vehicles commissioner may charge a fee for them to cover the entire cost of their production.

§ 31 — VETERANS' PROPERTY TAX TASK FORCE***Purpose***

The bill establishes an eight-member task force to (1) evaluate state property tax exemptions, abatements, and other relief for veterans; (2) make recommendations about whether there should be adjustments to the relief for it to align more effectively with the intent of the relief when it was enacted; and (3) create a list of Connecticut municipalities with local property tax relief and the type of relief available in each.

The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Veterans' Affairs and Planning and Development committees by

January 1, 2023.

Membership and Appointments

Under the bill, the task force members must be appointed as follows: two each by the House speaker and the Senate president pro tempore, and one each by the House and Senate majority and minority leaders. Task force members may also be legislators.

The bill requires (1) the initial appointments to be made within 30 days after the bill's passage and (2) any vacancy to be filled by the appointing authority.

Administration

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore to select the task force's chairpersons from among its membership. The first meeting must be scheduled to occur within 60 days after the bill's passage.

The bill requires the Veterans' Affairs Committee's administrative staff to serve as the task force's administrative staff. The task force ends when it submits its report to the legislature or January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

BACKGROUND

Qualifying Condition

By law, a "veteran" is anyone who was honorably discharged, released under honorable conditions, or released with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying condition from active service in the armed forces. A "qualifying condition" is a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, a disclosed military sexual trauma, or a determination that sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression was more likely than not the primary reason for the other than honorable discharge (CGS § 27-103).

Existing Veterans Property Tax Exemptions

By law, municipalities must provide property tax exemptions to

qualifying veterans who (1) served during specified wartime periods or actions (CGS § 12-81(19)), (2) retired from service after 30 years (CGS § 12-81(19)), or (3) have qualifying disabilities (CGS § 12-81(20) & (21)).

With their legislative bodies' approval, municipalities may grant certain additional exemptions (municipal-option exemptions) to these veterans and others who do not qualify for the state-mandated exemptions. For example, municipalities may provide a property tax exemption to veterans who have incomes below a municipally-set threshold and are ineligible for any of the exemptions for wartime, retired, or disabled veterans. Under this program, a municipality may exempt up to \$5,000 or 5% of a property's assessed value. The municipality may set the qualifying income threshold at the OPM-set amount or a higher amount (CGS § 12-81jj).

An individual's eligibility for an exemption is often contingent on the veteran's qualifying factors, such as an income below a set threshold. With certain exceptions, exemptions based on a veteran's income level use a statutorily-set threshold that OPM annually updates. For 2022, the income limit is \$38,100 for individuals and \$46,400 for married joint filers, based on 2021 income.

Municipal Veterans' Representatives

The law requires a municipality to designate a municipal employee or a volunteer to serve as its municipal veterans' representative if it does not have its own local veterans' advisory committee or otherwise fund a veterans' service officer. Under the law, these representatives have the same duties as a local veterans' advisory committee, which may include, among other things, coordinating the activities of public and private facilities concerned with veteran reemployment, education, rehabilitation, and adjustment to peacetime living.

Among other things, the municipal veterans' representative must (1) be a veteran or have practical experience handling veterans' issues, (2) take training from the Department of Veterans' Affairs' Office of Advocacy and Assistance, and (3) be available to veterans a minimum

number of hours per week as the municipality may establish (CGS § 27-135).

Related Bill

sHB 5478 (File 603), reported favorably by the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, contains nearly identical provisions concerning the new property tax exemption and the written notice about permissive municipal property tax exemptions for veterans and certain other individuals.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 16 Nay 0 (03/15/2022)