

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1128

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR

Title: VETERANS.

Vote Date: 3/7/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 2/28/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Veterans' & Military Affairs Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill increases the property tax exemption amounts that municipalities might provide to certain veterans. It requires municipalities to fully exempt property owned by a 100% disabled veteran, and the substitute language specifies that this exemption applies to the veteran's domicile or up. The bill also adds an additional set of increases to property tax exemptions for veterans and their families.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Brenda L. Kupchick, First Selectwoman, Town of Fairfield](#): Supports this bill

Connecticut has one of the lowest veteran populations in the country and is an extremely small and vulnerable segment of the Connecticut population in need of tax relief now.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Representative Jennifer Leeper, 132nd District, Connecticut General Assembly:](#)

While I do also still support the effort to increase the dollar amounts of any property tax exemptions that are available to certain Veterans as contained in this bill, I think it even more important to provide real relief is the provision in section 3 to fully exempt from taxation the property of Veterans with a 100% disability rating. This legislation to allow for a full exemption for Veterans with a 100 percent disability rating mirrors SB 639 An Act Exempting Certain Disabled Veterans from Property Tax which also had been introduced in the Veteran's Committee and is supported by constituents of mine.

[Dennis Carnelli, Chair, Veterans & Military Affairs Section of the Connecticut Bar Association:](#)

Submitting in individual capacity. Connecticut should join the eighteen other states, including our neighbors New Hampshire and New Jersey, that have enacted similar legislation exempting property owned by 100% disabled veterans from taxation. These are the most severely injured veterans among us. Most are aged 55 and over and many are underemployed or unemployable and subsisting on a fixed income. This bill would permanently alleviate that burden for the most severely injured veterans in our state.

[Click here for link to testimony additionally submitted as visual aid](#)

[Gregory Clark:](#)

As a veteran living with ALS, I have a 100% service related disability classification from the Veterans Administration. When we made improvements to our home needed because of the disease, our property tax increased. Our expenses can suddenly increase dramatically, such as the \$5,500 bill for caretakers to take care of me 24/7 when my wife had Covid. I am in favor of SBO1128 as it will help offset financial surprises such as what I just listed.

[Heidi Cornell, Veteran, United States Air Force:](#)

Connecticut is far behind most states when it comes to honoring the sacrifices their veterans have made; we can and should do more for our disabled veteran population. The great majority of states—39—give significantly higher tax exemptions to their disabled veterans than Connecticut does, and many states (currently 18) fully exempt 100% disabled veterans from property taxation. Meanwhile, Connecticut has one of the lowest veteran populations in the country and one of the highest property tax rates. While property taxes in Connecticut have skyrocketed, tax exemptions for veterans have not been updated for decades. The passage of this bill is a small but meaningful request to honor their sacrifice and help veterans stay in their homes in Connecticut.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns: Opposes this bill

We are concerned that by increasing the property tax exemptions available to veterans under existing law, the bill will shift a greater tax burden to other residents and businesses. Given the ongoing fiscal challenges facing municipalities, the state must refrain from establishing additional property tax exemptions, including municipal option tax exemptions, which undermine the ability of towns to fund critical programs and services for residents.

Randy Collins, Connecticut Council of Municipalities: Opposes this bill

Towns and cities remain almost exclusively reliant on the imposition of a regressive property tax system to fund all levels of local service and these proposals would further increase property tax rates that already subsidize the current mandated 99 property exemptions. Additional exemptions to the property tax further shift the burden of paying for local education and services to other taxpayers.

Reported by: Robert Mayne

Date: March 14, 2023