



# 2023 Acts Affecting Veterans and the Military

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## Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and one special act) significantly affecting veterans and the military enacted during the 2023 legislative session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website:

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/actsaffecting.asp>.

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden.

Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website:

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/olrsums.asp>.

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <http://www.cga.ct.gov>.

## Table of Contents

Military .....	4
Exempting Military Child Care Programs From State Licensing.....	4
U.S. Space Force .....	4
Veterans.....	4
Homeless and Housing Insecure Veterans .....	4
Municipal Veteran Services.....	4
Temporary Housing Pilot Program .....	5
Tuition Waivers for Graduate Degree Programs at Public Higher Education Institutions.....	5
Veteran Service Officers .....	5
Working Group on the Upkeep of Veterans' Graves.....	5

## **Military**

### ***Exempting Military Child Care Programs From State Licensing***

This session, the legislature passed a law exempting from state licensing requirements certain child care programs that serve military members' children only. It exempts these programs if they are administered by (1) the federal government or on federal property (e.g., a military installation) or (2) in-home day care providers (generally military spouses) that are certified by the United States Coast Guard or a Department of Defense military branch. These providers must comply with conditions similar to those state licensure requires (e.g., inspections, background checks, and training) ([PA 23-29](#), effective upon passage).

### ***U.S. Space Force***

This year, the legislature expanded the general definitions of "armed forces" and "members of armed forces" under state law to include the U.S. Space Force and its members (i.e., Guardians). This ensures guardians access to various state veterans' benefits and programs such as property tax exemptions, tuition benefits, and burial in a state veterans' cemetery ([PA 23-71](#), effective October 1, 2023).

## **Veterans**

### ***Homeless and Housing Insecure Veterans***

A new law requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), within available appropriations, to convert, rehabilitate, and renovate vacant, underused, or otherwise available properties for housing homeless or housing-insecure veterans. The department must build, improve, or remediate infrastructure to support these properties' residential use ([PA 23-207](#), § 22, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Municipal Veteran Services***

By law, municipalities must have a veterans' representative program and designate an entity to carry out the program's duties (e.g., assisting veterans and their dependents get services and benefits). This session, the General Assembly made various changes to the laws on these programs, such as (1) allowing municipalities to carry out program-related duties jointly and (2) requiring all designated representatives to complete a training offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Aid and Advocacy (prior law only required this of volunteers and town employees serving as representatives) ([PA 23-34](#), effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Temporary Housing Pilot Program***

New legislation requires the Department of Housing (DOH), within available appropriations, to establish a pilot program to provide temporary housing to individuals experiencing homelessness and veterans who need respite care. The program must (1) be implemented in at least three municipalities with populations of 75,000 or more and (2) provide at least 20 housing units for eligible individuals needing respite care due to injury or illness. The law requires the DOH commissioner to establish program eligibility criteria and allows the department to contract with nonprofit organizations to administer it. The pilot program terminates on January 1, 2025, by which time DOH must report to the Housing Committee ([PA 23-207](#), § 43, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Tuition Waivers for Graduate Degree Programs at Public Higher Education Institutions***

Existing law requires the Connecticut State University System (CSUS), UConn, and the regional community-technical colleges to waive tuition fees for certain veterans and other eligible students. A new law codifies existing practice by requiring CSUS and UConn to waive undergraduate and graduate degree program tuition fees for these students ([PA 23-139](#), effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Veteran Service Officers***

A new law increases the required personnel for OAA. Under the law, the office's minimum number of veteran service officers increases from six to eight and total staff members from eight to 10 ([PA 23-34](#), effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Working Group on the Upkeep of Veterans' Graves***

A new law creates a seven-member working group to develop a process to address deceased veterans' family members' concerns about the upkeep of veterans' graves. The group must submit a report and recommendations to the Veterans' and Military Affairs, General Law, and Public Health committees by January 1, 2024 ([SA 23-25](#), effective July 1, 2023).

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