

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-238

AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS FROM THE MILITARY

Title: RELIEF FUND.

Vote Date: 3/14/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/27/2024

File No.: 160

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill allows grants from the Military Relief Fund for essential household goods or services if payment for such goods or services would be a hardship to a serious injury or illness, or the death, of an eligible service member or an immediate family member thereof. Under existing law, the Military Department may make grants of up to \$5000 to servicemembers or their immediate family members from the Military Relief Fund for personal or household goods or services. The department may make these grants if the payment for these goods or services would be a hardship for the servicemember or their immediate family due to the member's military service. The bill expands the allowable hardship reasons to include the serious injury or illness or death of the servicemember or immediate family member. Having the Military Department award these grants would reduce the economic hardships that Service Members and their families face.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Military Department, Office of the Adjutant General, William A. O'Neill Armory, The Adjutant General, Major General, Francis J. Evon Jr: supports this bill and states that this minimal expansion will not impact the long-term viability of the "Military Relief Fund".

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

National Guard Association of Connecticut, Vice President, Daniel DePasquale: supports this and states how crucial this is for service members residing in Connecticut.

Veteran Advocate, Brian Daconto: supports this bill and states that every veteran deserves to have us not turn our backs on them.

Connecticut Veterans Legal Center, Executive Director, Alison Weir: supports this bill, which would allow some service members to afford essential goods and services more easily. Things like deployments, injury, illness, or death of a service member or their immediate family can disrupt their ability to pay for things they need. Opening the fund to those service members and their families impacted by injury, illness, or death is the right thing to do.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Patrick Buckley

Date: 3/25/2024