



Substitute House Bill No. 5285

Public Act No. 24-119

**AN ACT CONCERNING VETERANS' SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES
AND DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR CERTAIN FORMER ARMED
FORCES RESERVISTS.**

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

Section 1. Section 14-20b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2024*):

(a) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at the request of any veteran or member of the armed forces or the surviving spouse of such veteran or member, shall register any motor vehicle owned or leased for a period of at least one year by such person and shall issue a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates for each such motor vehicle, including a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates for any motor vehicle used exclusively for farming purposes by any such veteran or member of the armed forces, or the surviving spouse of such veteran or member, who is engaged in agricultural production as a trade or business. The plates shall expire and be renewed as provided in section 14-22. The commissioner shall charge a fee for such plates, which fee shall cover the entire cost of making such plates and shall be in addition to the fee for registration of such motor vehicle. The commissioner shall charge a fee of fifteen dollars to replace such plates that become mutilated or illegible. [As used in this subsection, "veteran"

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and "armed forces" have the same meanings as provided in section 27-103.] Any such member of the armed forces who is dishonorably discharged shall return such plates to the commissioner not later than thirty days after such discharge. The commissioner shall not renew such plates for any motor vehicle owned or leased by any such member of the armed forces who is dishonorably discharged.

(b) (1) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at the request of any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units, which units served in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War, or any person who is an eligible former reservist, or the surviving spouse of any such person, and after verification from the Department of Veterans Affairs as provided under subdivision (2) or (3), as applicable, of this subsection, shall register any motor vehicle owned or leased for a period of at least one year by such person and shall issue a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates for each such motor vehicle, including a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates for any motor vehicle used exclusively for farming purposes by any such person, or the surviving spouse of such person, who is engaged in agricultural production as a trade or business. The plates shall expire and be renewed as provided in section 14-22. The commissioner shall charge a fee for such plates, which fee shall cover the entire cost of making such plates and shall be in addition to the fee for registration of such motor vehicle.

(2) Any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units, or the surviving spouse of such person, may submit a request to the Department of Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran, based on such person's service during the Vietnam War, for the purpose of obtaining a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates under subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such person, or the surviving spouse of such person, shall provide to said department (A) an affidavit stating (i) when such person served, (ii) where such person

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served, (iii) the unit in which such person served, and (iv) the capacity in which such person served; (B) any available corroborating witness affidavits; (C) any available official documentation of service; and (D) any other documents supporting such person's or such surviving spouse's affidavit. Said department shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such request, verify whether such person was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units and, if so verified, notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request and verification.

(3) (A) Any person who is an eligible former reservist, or the surviving spouse of such person, may submit a request to the Department of Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran, based on such person's service in a reserve component of the armed forces, for the purpose of obtaining a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates under subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such person, or the surviving spouse of such person, shall provide to said department all available official documentation of such service. Said department shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such request, verify such person's service and, if so verified, notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request and verification.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection or subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, neither the issuance of such registration and number plates to a person by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles nor the listing of such person as a veteran by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall constitute proof of such person's eligibility for any other benefit available to veterans.

(c) [Any such member of the armed forces who is dishonorably discharged shall return such plates to the commissioner not later than thirty days after such discharge. The commissioner shall not renew such plates for any motor vehicle owned or leased by any such member of the armed forces who is dishonorably discharged.] As used in this section, "eligible former reservist" means any person honorably

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discharged from, released under honorable conditions from or released with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying condition from, the United States Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard; and "veteran", "armed forces" and "qualifying condition" have the same meanings as provided in section 27-103.

Sec. 2. Section 14-36h of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2024*):

(a) Each motor vehicle operator's license issued by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles in accordance with section 14-36 and each identity card issued by said commissioner in accordance with section 1-1h shall contain the following: (1) The person's full legal name; (2) the person's date of birth; (3) the person's gender; (4) the person's height and eye color; (5) the person's assigned operator's license or identity card number; (6) the person's address of principal residence in this state; (7) the person's signature; (8) the person's photograph or digital image; and (9) if applicable, the person's status as a veteran, as provided in subsections (e) and (f) of this section.

(b) If any person does not reside in any state, territory or possession of the United States because such person is on active military duty with the United States Armed Forces, and such person's home state of record is Connecticut, as reflected in the records of the United States Department of Defense, United States Department of Homeland Security or any federal department under which the United States Coast Guard operates, such person may obtain a Connecticut operator's license or identity card, provided such person: (1) Does not have an operator's license or identity card issued by another state, territory or possession of the United States, or surrenders any such license or identity card; (2) has a current APO or FPO mailing address; (3) designates such person's home address as 60 State Street, Wethersfield,

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CT 06161; and (4) meets all other requirements for obtaining an operator's license or identity card in this state.

(c) The commissioner shall provide that each such license or identity card document contains physical security features designed to prevent tampering, counterfeiting or duplication of the document.

(d) Each such document shall also contain one or more machine-readable technology feature or component, including, but not limited to, a bar code or magnetic strip.

(e) Any person who is a veteran may submit a request to the Department of Veterans Affairs to have [his or her] such person's status as a veteran contained on [his or her] such person's motor vehicle operator's license or identity card. Said department shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such request, verify whether such person is a veteran and, if so verified, notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request and verification. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall indicate such person's status as a veteran on any motor vehicle operator's license or identity card issued to such person upon original issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle operator's license or identity card or upon issuance of a duplicate motor vehicle operator's license or identity card.

(f) (1) Any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units, which units served in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War, or any person who is an eligible former reservist, may submit a request to the Department of Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran, based on such person's service during the Vietnam War or in a reserve component of the armed forces, respectively, on [his or her] such person's motor vehicle operator's license or identity card. Said department shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such request and the documents required under subdivision (2) or (3), as applicable, of this subsection, verify whether

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such person was such a member or is such an eligible former reservist, as applicable, and, if so verified, notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request and verification. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall indicate such person's status as a veteran on any motor vehicle operator's license or identity card issued to such person upon original issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle operator's license or identity card or upon issuance of a duplicate motor vehicle operator's license or identity card.

(2) Any such person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units shall submit to the Department of Veterans Affairs, in addition to the request under subdivision (1) of this subsection, (A) an affidavit stating (i) when such person served, (ii) where such person served, (iii) the unit in which such person served, and (iv) the capacity in which such person served; (B) any available corroborating witness affidavits; (C) any available official documentation of service; and (D) any other documents supporting such person's affidavit.

(3) (A) Any such person who is an eligible former reservist shall submit to the Department of Veterans Affairs, in addition to the request under subdivision (1) of this subsection, all available official documentation of such person's service in a reserve component of the armed forces and discharge or release therefrom.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, neither the listing of a person as a veteran by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs nor the indication of such person's status as a veteran on any motor vehicle operator's license or identity card by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall constitute proof of such person's eligibility for any other benefit available to veterans.

(g) As used in this section: (1) "Full legal name" means the most complete version of the name that appears on a person's certificate of birth, official passport or other document or documents accepted by the

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Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to verify the person's identity, unless the person presents a marriage license or certificate, a certificate of civil union, a divorce decree or an order of a court of competent jurisdiction pertaining to a permanent change of the person's name; [and] (2) "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, or any former member of the armed forces who is entitled to retirement pay under 10 USC Chapter 1223, as amended from time to time, or, but for age, would be so entitled; (3) "eligible former reservist" means any person honorably discharged from, released under honorable conditions from or released with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying condition from, the United States Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard; and (4) "armed forces" and "qualifying condition" have the same meanings as provided in section 27-103.

Approved June 5, 2024