



House of Representatives

File No. 656

General Assembly

February Session, 2024

(Reprint of File No. 176)

Substitute House Bill No. 5404
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 3, 2024

**AN ACT CONCERNING MILITARY TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE AND
THE DRIVER'S LICENSE ENDORSEMENT TO OPERATE FIRE
APPARATUS.**

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 14-36a of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
3 *1, 2024*):

4 (d) (1) A license of any class that contains the designation "Q"
5 indicates eligibility to operate fire apparatus. A "Q" endorsement shall
6 signify that the holder either has been trained to operate fire apparatus
7 in accordance with standards established by the Commission on Fire
8 Prevention and Control [. No] or has qualifying military training and
9 experience as described in subdivision (2) of this subsection. Except as
10 provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, no such endorsement
11 shall be issued to any person until [he or she] such person demonstrates
12 personally to the commissioner, or the commissioner's designee,

13 including the Connecticut Fire Academy, any regional fire school or the
 14 chief local fire official of any municipality as defined in section 7-323j,
 15 by means of testing in a representative vehicle that such person
 16 possesses the skills necessary for operation of fire apparatus.

17 (2) If the holder of a license of any class is (A) a veteran who applies
 18 to the commissioner for a "Q" endorsement not later than two years after
 19 the date of discharge from the military and who, not more than two
 20 years prior to such discharge, met the conditions and limitations set
 21 forth in 49 CFR 383.77(a)(2) or 49 CFR 383.77(b)(2), as amended from
 22 time to time, or (B) a member of the armed forces or the National Guard
 23 who applies to the commissioner for a "Q" endorsement and who meets
 24 the conditions and limitations set forth in 49 CFR 383.77(a)(2) or 49 CFR
 25 383.77(b)(2), as amended from time to time, the commissioner shall
 26 waive the requirement under subdivision (1) of this subsection to
 27 demonstrate that such veteran or member possesses the skills necessary
 28 for operation of fire apparatus. The commissioner shall prescribe the
 29 form and manner by which such veteran or member shall apply for such
 30 waiver. As used in this subparagraph, "veteran" and "armed forces"
 31 have the same meanings as provided in section 27-103.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2024	14-36a(d)

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: None

Explanation

The bill, which does not have a fiscal impact, provides a waiver of the skills-based demonstration requirement for certain veterans and military personnel when applying to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for a Q-endorsement (i.e., to drive a fire truck). Administering the waiver is within DMV's existing expertise.

House "A" makes clarifying and technical changes to the underlying bill and results in no fiscal impact.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5404 (as amended by House "A")******AN ACT CONCERNING MILITARY TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE AND THE DRIVER'S LICENSE ENDORSEMENT TO OPERATE FIRE APPARATUS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner to waive certain Q-endorsement eligibility requirements for qualifying veterans and members of the armed forces or National Guard ("military members"). (A Q-endorsement is a license endorsement that authorizes holders to operate a fire apparatus (i.e., drive a fire truck).) Under current law, applicants for this endorsement must have (1) been trained to drive a fire truck according to Commission on Fire Prevention and Control standards and (2) demonstrated the necessary skills (i.e., passed a driving test) on a representative vehicle, among other requirements.

To qualify for a waiver under the bill, members must meet minimum requirements set in a federal law on commercial driver's license (CDL) testing waivers. This federal law allows states to waive the CDL knowledge test and driving skills test and sets qualifications for the waivers (see below). Under the bill, the DMV commissioner must waive both the Q-endorsement training and driving test requirements for members who meet the minimum federal requirements for either the CDL knowledge test or driving skills test waiver.

*House Amendment "A" (1) requires the commissioner to waive both the Q-endorsement driving test and the training requirement, and (2) replaces the underlying bill's eligibility requirements (based, in part, on a Federal Highway Administration vehicle classification system) with eligibility requirements based on federal CDL eligibility waivers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

FEDERAL CDL WAIVER REQUIREMENTS APPLIED TO Q-ENDORSEMENTS

Federal law sets rules for CDLs for interstate operation and states are generally required to conform their licensing laws to these requirements. Among other things, these rules include requiring CDL applicants to pass a knowledge test and driving skills test. However, they allow states to waive these test requirements under certain circumstances.

Federal law generally allows states to waive the CDL knowledge test requirement for military members who show that, within the year prior to applying, they:

1. were regularly employed in one of seven specified military capacities (e.g., an Air Force pavement and construction equipment operator, Army PATRIOT launching station operator, or Marine Corps motor vehicle operator – 3531);
2. operated a commercial motor vehicle representative of the type they expect to operate upon separation from the military;
3. have not held more than one civilian license at the same time; and
4. have not been convicted of certain specified motor vehicle offenses or had any license suspended or revoked.

Similarly, states may generally waive the CDL driving skills test requirement for military members who show, among other things, that they:

1. were regularly employed within the last year in a military position that required driving a commercial motor vehicle;
2. drove, for the two years prior to separating from the military, a vehicle representative of the commercial type they expect to operate upon separation from the military;

- 3. have not held more than one civilian license at the same time; and
- 4. have not been convicted of certain specified motor vehicle offenses or had any license suspended or revoked.

Under the bill, if a military member meets either of these sets of CDL waiver requirements (i.e., for either the knowledge test or driving skills test), the DMV commissioner must waive both the Q-endorsement knowledge test and training requirements.

BACKGROUND

By law, a veteran is anyone honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions, or released with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying condition, from active service in the armed forces (i.e., the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, Air Force, and any of their reserve components, including the Connecticut National Guard when under federal service) (CGS § 27-103, as amended by PA 23-71).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/14/2024)

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 35 Nay 0 (04/15/2024)