General Assembly **Substitute Bill No. 1243**

January Session, 2025

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AN ACT CONCERNING BUS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

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

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) As used in this section, "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in subsection (a) of section 27-103 of the general statutes and "fare inspection duties" has the same meaning as provided in section 13b-2 of the general statutes.

(b) Any veteran shall be exempt from payment of the lawful charge for state-owned or controlled bus public transportation service, provided such veteran presents to an employee of the Department of Transportation or a third-party contractor with fare inspection duties or the driver of such bus, as applicable, a motor vehicle operator's license or identity card indicating such person's status as a veteran issued in accordance with the provisions of subsection (e) of section 14-36h of the general statutes.

Sec. 2 (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Not later than August 1, 2025, the Commissioner of Transportation shall establish a program to allow students who are enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, of a public school under the jurisdiction of a participating local or regional board of education to use state-owned or controlled bus public transportation service without cost or at a reduced cost, in accordance with the contract

negotiated under subsection (b) of this section. A participating local or regional board of education may obtain passes for the use of such bus public transportation service under such program and distribute or sell such passes to its students. The commissioner shall publish information regarding such program and an application process for such program on the Department of Transportation's Internet web site in a manner that the commissioner determines will maximize awareness and participation by the greatest number of local or regional boards of education.

(b) Upon receipt of an application from a local or regional board of education to participate in the program, the commissioner may negotiate the terms and conditions and enter into a contract with such local or regional board of education. Such terms and conditions shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) the amount of compensation or reimbursement required from the local or regional board of education, and (2) any limitations on the times a student may use state-owned or controlled bus public transportation service. The compensation or reimbursement negotiated in the contract shall be in an amount as the commissioner deems necessary or advisable, provided the amount is sufficient to ensure that bus public transportation service expenditures incurred by the department do not increase as a result of the program and to cover any administrative costs incurred by the department in the operation of the program. A contract under the program shall be valid upon the approval of the Office of Policy and Management for a term of not more than two years, except the first contract with a local or regional board of education shall not exceed twelve months. Prior to any renewal of a contract with a local or regional board of education under the program, the commissioner shall consider prior pass utilization information and any bus public transportation service expenditure increases incurred by the department for the purpose of reevaluating the amount of compensation or reimbursement required from such local or regional board of education.

(c) Not later than August 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Transportation shall submit a report to the Secretary

of the Office of Policy and Management on the financial data and pass utilization for each contract under the program.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*July 1, 2025*	New section
Sec. 2	*July 1, 2025*	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:
In Section 1(b), "the provisions of" was inserted before "subsection (e) of section 14-36h" for consistency with standard drafting conventions; and in Section 2(a), in the first sentence, "in accordance with the contract negotiated under subsection (b) of this section" was inserted for clarity and the third sentence was redrafted for clarity.

TRA *Joint Favorable Subst.*