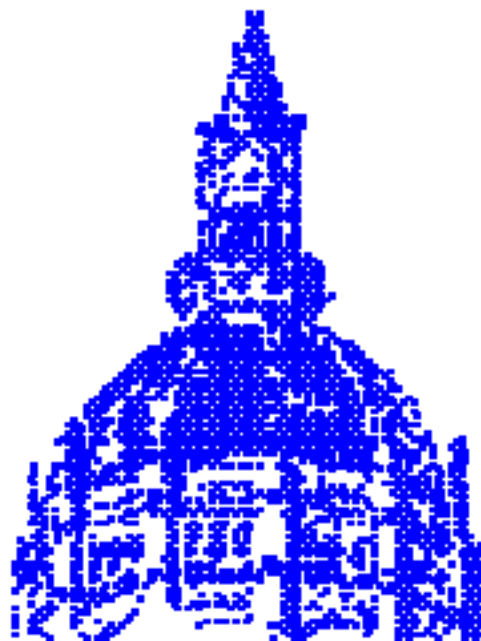


Office of Legislative Research
Connecticut General Assembly



VETERANS AND THE MILITARY



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NOTICE TO READERS

This report summarizes new laws (public acts) affecting Veterans and the Military passed during the 2011 regular session. At the end of each summary, we indicate the public act (PA) number. OLR does not summarize special acts.

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

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS WEBSITE

A new law requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to publish an informational page on its website by July 1, 2012, and after that date maintain and annually update it. The page must list any benefits, services, or programs any state or federal agency, department, or institution offers veterans or their families, including:

1. any information concerning the eligibility requirements and application process for veterans' benefits, services, or programs;
2. the name and contact information of any entity offering them; and
3. a link to the entity's website.

(DVA's website is www.dva.ct.gov.)

PA 11-3, effective upon passage

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS FOR KOREAN WAR VETERANS

A new law expands local or regional school boards' authority to award high school diplomas to veterans who did not receive them because they left high school for military service. Previously, boards could do so only for World War II veterans. Under the new law, they may also do so for veterans of the Korean hostilities. The new law covers honorably discharged veterans who served actively from June 27, 1950 to October 27, 1953 in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Air Force or any of their reserve components, including the Connecticut National Guard.

PA 11-17, effective July 1, 2011

COMPOSITION OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENT AND THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

A new law increases, from 10 to 15 years, the minimum number of commissioned service years a person must have in the U.S. armed forces to be appointed adjutant general. It requires the person to have reached at least the rank of (1) lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, or Air Force or (2) commander in the U.S. Navy or Coast Guard.

The new law specifies that the (1) Military Department is comprised of the state's armed forces and any civilian employees the adjutant general appoints and (2) state's armed forces are under the military command and control of the adjutant general. By law, the Military Department is under the adjutant general's charge. The governor is commander-in-chief of the state's armed forces when they are not in U.S. service and he appoints the adjutant general.

PA 11-41, effective upon passage

DEATH CERTIFICATE FEE WAIVERS FOR VETERANS

A new law waives the \$20 fee for one certified copy of a veteran's death certificate when the deceased veteran's spouse, child, or parent requests a copy. By law, anyone age 18 or older must pay \$20 for a copy of a death certificate from the municipality where the death occurred or the Department of Public Health's State Office of Vital Records. Under existing law, a "veteran" is an individual honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions from active service in the U.S. armed forces.

PA 11-49, effective October 1, 2011

VETERANS LICENSE PLATES FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

A new law extends the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) commissioner's authority to issue special registration certificates and veterans' license plates to active U.S. armed forces members or their surviving spouses who request a certificate and plate for a motor vehicle they have owned or leased for at least one year. The commissioner must do this upon request from any member of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Air Force and any of their reserve components, including the Connecticut National Guard under federal service.

The commissioner must already provide the certificates and plates to veterans or their surviving spouses under the same conditions.

The new law requires an armed forces member who is dishonorably discharged to return the plates to the motor vehicles commissioner within 30 days after the discharge. It also prohibits the commissioner from renewing veterans' plates for any motor vehicle that such a member owns or leases.

By law, anyone who fails to surrender a falsely obtained motor vehicle registration or license plate when the motor vehicles commissioner demands it is subject to a fine of up to \$200.

PA 11-56, effective upon passage

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

A new law proposes bonding for a number of veterans’ affairs and military projects. Table 1 below contains the new law’s proposals (PA 11-57).

TABLE 1: PA 11-57, Proposed Bonds for Capital Improvements Related to Veterans’ Affairs and the Military

§§	AGENCY	State Projects	FY 12	FY 13
2 (d)	Veterans’ Affairs	Power plant upgrades, Rocky Hill	1,750,000	0
		Boiler repairs and improvements, Rocky Hill	250,000	0
2 (h), 21 (g)	Military	State matching funds for anticipated federal reimbursable projects	2,000,000	2,000,000
		Buildings and grounds: alterations and improvements, including utilities, mechanical systems, and energy conservation projects	1,000,000	1,000,000
		Construction of a readiness center for the Connecticut Army National Guard Civil Support Team in Windsor Locks	1,250,000	0
		Construction of a combined support maintenance shop for Connecticut National Guard equipment in Windsor Locks	4,000,000	0
		New London National Guard Armory and Stone’s Ranch storage facility (East Lyme): alterations, renovations, and improvements for the 250 th Engineering Company	0	2,000,000

PA 11-57, FY 12 authorizations are effective July 1, 2011 and FY 13 authorizations are effective July 1, 2012

INTEREST OWED ON PROPERTY TAXES BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES CALLED TO ACTIVE SERVICE

A new law (1) expands, to those serving in Afghanistan, the law’s waiver of property tax interest for certain U.S. armed forces members called to active service in Iraq and (2) authorizes municipalities’ legislative bodies to vote to waive property tax interest for certain U.S. armed forces members who have been called to active service outside the state.

PA 11-62, October 1, 2011, and applicable to assessment years beginning on or after that date

VETERANS STATUS ON STATE MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENSES AND IDENTITY CARDS AND FREE PASSES FOR ANY STATE PARK, FOREST, OR STATE RECREATIONAL FACILITY FOR CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS

A new law requires the DMV commissioner to include a person's status as a veteran, if applicable, on his or her state driver's license or identity card. The person must submit a request to have this status included to DVA, which must verify the status to the DMV commissioner.

The new law also extends a free lifetime pass for state parks, forests, and recreational facilities to any resident who is a disabled wartime veteran, as defined under state or federal law. The law already allows a resident age 65 or older to apply for such a pass, which allows free parking, admission, and boat access parking. (The pass does not apply to any park, forest, or facility that a private concessionaire wholly manages and may not apply to payments required for special events.)

PA 11-68, effective January 1, 2013; except for the free state park, forest, and recreation pass provision, which is effective upon passage.

SCHOOL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS BY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AT MILITARY BASES AND JROTC PROGRAM INSTRUCTORS WORKING IN SCHOOLS

A new law allows advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and physician assistants stationed on military bases to perform required health assessments for students attending public schools. Under prior law, such APRNs and physician assistants could perform student assessments only if they were licensed in Connecticut (§ 1).

It also overrides statutory requirements requiring public school teachers to be certified to allow a board of education to employ as a JROTC Program instructor or assistant instructor in a school anyone who is certified as such by the U.S. armed forces (§ 10).

PA 11-179, these provisions are effective on passage

STATE IDENTIFICATION CARD FEE WAIVER FOR BLIND VETERANS

A new law authorizes the DMV commissioner to waive the \$22.50 non-driver identification card fee for any applicant who is a blind veteran. For eligibility purposes:

1. a “veteran” is an individual honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions from active service in the U.S. armed forces (CGS § 27-103) and
2. someone is considered blind if his or her central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses, or if it is better than 20/200 but is accompanied by a limitation in his or her fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle of no more than 20 degrees (CGS § 1-1f).

PA 11-197, effective October 1, 2011

DRIVER’S LICENSES FOR STATE RESIDENTS ON ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY

A new law allows a state resident in the U.S. Armed Forces stationed outside the U.S. on active military duty to get a driver’s license or non-driver’s ID card if he or she (1) does not have, or surrenders, a license or ID card from another state, U.S. territory, or possession; (2) has a current Army Post Office or Fleet Post Office mailing address; (3) designates his or her home address as 60 State Street, Wethersfield, CT 06161 (DMV’s central office); and (4) meets all other requirements for getting a license or ID card. Residence in Connecticut must be reflected in the records of the U.S. Defense Department, Department of Homeland Security, or a department that oversees the U.S. Coast Guard.

PA 11-213, effective October 1, 2011

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