

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

Legislative Office Building, Room 5200

Hartford, CT 06106 ◊ (860) 240-0200

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa>

sSB-284

AN ACT CONCERNING BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS WHO HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER OR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY OR WHO HAVE HAD AN EXPERIENCE OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 19 \$	FY 20 \$
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below
Resources of the Special Transportation Fund	TF - Potential Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below
Various State Agencies	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund; TF=Transportation Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 19 \$	FY 20 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below

Explanation

This bill expands eligibility for veteran benefits and results in costs to multiple agencies and revenue loss to the General Fund, Special Transportation Fund, and municipalities.

The bill expands veteran's benefits to those who were discharged under conditions other than honorable and have a qualifying condition. Under the bill "qualifying condition" is post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or a military sexual trauma experience. It is estimated that this bill would affect approximately

Primary Analyst: ME
Contributing Analyst(s):
Reviewer: PR

4/2/18

800 people¹, but this population's utilization rates of the veteran benefits is unknown. Below is a list of non-wartime and wartime benefits with a fiscal impact that this population could be eligible for².

Non-Wartime Benefits:

- **Veterans Small Business:** Effective October 1, 2016, Department of Administrative Services (DAS) provides certain veteran-owned businesses with up to a 15% price preference for certain open market orders or contracts.
- **High School Diploma:** The exam fee waiver for high school diplomas is waived for veterans.
- **Veterans Agriculture Program:** This program gives a tax incentive to encourage certain veterans to start a farming business. The average incentive provided for a start-up farmer is less than \$1,500.
- **Certain Veteran Benefits Not Included in Assistance Program Eligibility Calculations:** The Department of Social Services commissioner disregards a veteran's or surviving spouse's federal aid and attendance pension benefits when calculating income for certain assistance programs.

Wartime Benefits:

- **Retirement Credit:** Special service credit for members of the Municipal Employees' Retirement System for those who leave employment to enter the armed services and then return to employment within six months of discharge. Also, state workers in hazardous duty service who were granted military leave and returned within 90 days of discharge receive retirement credit for the period of their wartime

¹ Source: Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School and the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs.

² All veterans are eligible for non-wartime benefits but additional requirements must be met for wartime benefits.

service.

- **Tuition waivers:** State public colleges and universities except for Charter Oak State College waive tuition for wartime veterans who are accepted into the institution and live in the state.
- **Property Tax Exemptions:** State law provides a minimum of \$1,500 in municipal property tax exemptions. Municipalities also have the option to exempt \$20,000 or 10% of a property's assessed value in addition to the veterans' exemptions.
- **Motor Vehicle Registration Fee Exemptions:** The law authorizes free motor vehicle registration if a wartime veteran is disabled, former prisoner of war, or recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.
- **Disabled Veterans License Plates:** The Commissioner of the DMV will issue free number plates to a disabled veteran. These plates exempt the veteran from overtime parking fines provided they don't leave their vehicle in the same spot for over 24 hours.
- **Admission to the Veterans Healthcare Center:** Wartime veterans are eligible for admission to the Veterans Healthcare Center. They are also eligible for admission to certain hospitals at state expense unless other funds are available.
- **Burial Expenses:** If a wartime veteran dies without enough money to pay for burial expenses as determined by the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), the state must pay \$1,800 towards his or her funeral expenses.
- **Commissioner's Temporary Assistance:** Wartime veterans with a disability or other service-related cause are eligible for temporary financial assistance from the Commissioner of

Veterans Affairs in an amount and for a time he decides.

- **Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund:** Provides temporary aid to needy wartime veterans and their spouses and dependent children.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.