

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 19-33—SB 861

Veterans' Affairs Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF "SERVICE IN TIME OF WAR" AND STATE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS' SERVICES

SUMMARY: This act extends certain state war service benefits to veterans who served less than 90 days in a period of war (see BACKGROUND) because they incurred or aggravated an injury in the line of duty that is not a service-connected disability rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (U.S. VA).

The act also removes prior law's two-year state residency eligibility requirement for certain state benefits (e.g., hospital care and funeral expenses) for veterans who did not reside in Connecticut at the time of their enlistment or induction into the armed forces.

It also makes technical, minor, and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

STATE VETERANS' BENEFITS

Injury Incurred or Aggravated in the Line of Duty

The act extends certain state war service benefits to veterans who served less than 90 days in a war, but were separated from service because of an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, even if the injury was not a service-connected disability rated by the U.S. VA, as prior law required in such circumstances. For eligible veterans (some benefits also accrue to eligible spouses and dependent children), such benefits include, among other things:

1. certain property tax exemptions (minimum of \$1,500);
2. tuition waivers for the state's public colleges and universities;
3. civil service exam bonus points;
4. Connecticut Airport Authority set-aside of at least 30% of projects and contracts;
5. state employee hazardous duty retirement credit;
6. vesting service and special service credit for the state employee retirement system (SERS);
7. status as a "veteran" under the state personnel act;
8. temporary aid from the Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund;
9. special license plate and parking privileges of disabled veterans;
10. veterans' service ribbons and medals; and
11. funeral honor guards.

Presumably, such veterans are already eligible for benefits that require wartime service but do not specify service duration (e.g., honorary high school

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diploma (CGS § 10-221a(i)) and the Veterans Affairs commissioner's discretionary temporary assistance (CGS § 27-125)).

Removal of the Two-Year Residency Requirement

The act removes prior law's two-year state residency requirement for veterans who were not Connecticut residents at the time of enlistment or induction into the armed forces for eligibility for certain benefits, including, among other things:

1. admission into any hospital, upon the Veterans Affairs commissioner's request, at the state's expense unless other means of payment are available;
2. admission to the veterans residential services facility or healthcare center;
3. \$1,800 toward funeral expenses or cremation for certain indigent veterans;
4. cost of transportation and erection or installation of a grave headstone; and
5. temporary financial assistance at the commissioner's discretion.

BACKGROUND

War Time Service

The table below summarizes the dates and service conditions that constitute "service in time of war" for purposes of state veterans' benefits.

Post-1940 "Service in Time of War"

Operation	Period of War	Service Condition
World War II	12/07/41-12/31/46*	Active service during the war
Korean War	06/27/50-01/31/55	Active service during the war
Lebanon Conflict	07/01/58-11/01/58 or 09/29/82-03/30/84	Combat or combat-support role in Lebanon
Vietnam Era	02/28/61-07/01/75	Active service during the war
Grenada invasion	10/25/83-12/15/83	Combat or combat-support role in Grenada required
Operation Earnest Will (escort of Kuwaiti tankers flying U.S. flag in Persian Gulf)	07/24/87-08/01/90	Combat or combat-support role required in the operation
Panama invasion	12/20/89-01/31/90	Combat or combat-support role required in the invasion
Persian Gulf War	08/02/90 until a future date prescribed by the president or law	Active-service anywhere during the war (not necessarily in the Persian Gulf or in a combat role)

*The ending date specified in CGS § 12-86 for property tax exemptions is 12/31/47