

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 19-129**—sSB 968

*Veterans' Affairs Committee*  
*Appropriations Committee*

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MILITARY TO MACHINISTS AND VETERANS PLATFORM TO EMPLOYMENT PILOT PROGRAMS AND PROVIDING OTHER EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS**

**SUMMARY:** This act requires the workforce development board for the state's southwest region (i.e., The WorkPlace, Inc.) to develop and operate two pilot programs for veterans within its region: the (1) Military to Machinists program, to help veterans earn an advanced manufacturing certificate and find a job in that field, and (2) Veterans Platform to Employment program, to provide training and subsidized employment for long-term unemployed veterans. The board must implement both programs by October 1, 2019, and annually report to the Veterans' Affairs Committee on each program beginning by February 1, 2020.

The act allows the board, in conjunction with other regional workforce development boards, to offer the pilot programs in other regions in the state. It also requires the board, by October 1, 2019, to identify appropriate written materials on mental health conditions common to veterans to distribute to employers, including to those participating in the pilot programs.

Lastly, the act requires the Department of Labor (DOL) to provide specified information to veterans who contact the department for employment or workforce development services, including information on the Military to Machinists pilot program for those veterans who express an interest in advanced manufacturing.

Under the act, a veteran is an individual (1) honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions from active service in the armed forces or (2) with a "qualifying condition" who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or for bad conduct (i.e., someone diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury or who disclosed a military sexual trauma experience). "Armed forces" means the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force, or any reserve component, including the Connecticut National Guard when under federal service.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2019, except the provision on DOL's workforce development assistance to veterans is effective October 1, 2019.

**§ 1 — MILITARY TO MACHINISTS PILOT PROGRAM**

*Program Purpose*

The Military to Machinists pilot program must help veterans in the program's region (1) earn an advanced manufacturing certificate from a qualifying certificate program (described below) and (2) subsequently find a job with an eligible

## OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

business in the advanced manufacturing field. Under the act, an “eligible business” is one that operates in Connecticut, has been registered to conduct business for at least 12 months, and is in good standing with respect to state and local taxes. It excludes the state or any of its political subdivisions.

Under the act, a “qualifying advanced manufacturing certificate program” is a for-credit or noncredit sub-baccalaureate advanced manufacturing certificate program offered by a public higher education institution or private occupational school in which at least 75% of the program’s graduates are employed in a field related to or requiring such certificate in the year following graduation.

The act defines “advanced manufacturing” as a manufacturing process that extensively uses computer, high-precision, or information technologies integrated with a high-performance workforce in a production system capable of furnishing a diverse mix of products in small or large volumes with either the efficiency of mass production or the flexibility of custom manufacturing in order to respond quickly to customer demands. It includes newly developed methods to manufacture existing products and the manufacture of new products emerging from new advanced technologies.

### *Workforce Development Liaisons*

The act requires the southwest workforce development board to designate a number of employees, as it determines appropriate, as liaisons to provide the assistance described above. The liaisons must help veterans served by the pilot program obtain funding to attend a qualifying advanced manufacturing certificate program. This may include accessing existing veterans tuition waivers and assistance from the Workforce Training Authority Fund (i.e., an account in DOL used to, among other things, provide training assistance to eligible recipients the authority approves).

The liaisons must also help eligible businesses apply for (1) Unemployed Armed Forces Subsidized Training and Employment Program grants, which offset the cost of training and compensating eligible unemployed veterans, and (2) apprenticeship tax credits for qualifying programs in manufacturing, construction, and plastics-related trades, if applicable.

### *Promotional Materials*

Starting by February 1, 2020, the act requires the board to annually develop or approve promotional materials describing the Military to Machinists pilot program and the various opportunities and benefits that it may provide veterans in the state. The board must distribute the promotional materials to qualified veterans’ charitable organizations and Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service (OASIS) Members centers (see BACKGROUND). It must revise and redistribute the materials as it deems appropriate.

### *Annual Report to the Veterans Committee*

## OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

Starting by February 1, 2020, and until the program ends, the act requires the board to report annually to the Veterans' Affairs Committee on the (1) program's operation and (2) board's recommendation to continue, discontinue, or expand the program. The report must include measures of the pilot program's effectiveness, including data on the number of veterans:

1. served by the pilot program;
2. pursuing or earning advanced manufacturing certificates through the program and the type and amount of funding assistance the veterans received; and
3. securing employment in advanced manufacturing with an eligible business through the program, including the (a) salaries they earned, (b) number retaining employment in advanced manufacturing over time, and (c) number and amount of grants and tax credits received by eligible businesses hiring them.

### § 2 — VETERANS PLATFORM TO EMPLOYMENT PILOT PROGRAM

#### *Program Purpose*

Under the Veterans Platform to Employment Pilot Program, the act requires the southwest workforce development board to provide training and subsidized employment for veterans who have experienced long-term unemployment in a manner similar to the board's existing Platform to Employment Program (i.e., a partnership with DOL and the state's workforce development boards aimed at returning the long-term unemployed to work). The Veterans Platform to Employment Pilot Program must provide veterans in the region with:

1. a preparatory program that includes services such as skills assessments, career readiness workshops, employee assistance programs, and coaching; and
2. employment assistance that includes identifying positions at local employers and providing subsidies to employers that hire veterans for trial work experiences that may lead to continued employment.

The program may offer additional services to help veterans, including personal and family support services and financial counseling.

#### *Report to the Veterans Committee*

Under the act, starting by February 1, 2020, and until the program ends, the board must submit an annual report to the Veterans' Affairs Committee on the (1) program's operation and (2) board's recommendation to continue, discontinue, or expand the program. The report must include measures of the program's effectiveness, including data on the number of veterans (1) served, (2) placed with employers by the program and the salaries they earned, and (3) retaining employment over time.

### § 3 — WRITTEN MATERIALS ON VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

## OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

The act requires the southwest workforce development board to identify appropriate written materials on mental health conditions common to veterans to distribute to employers. These conditions include post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide risk, depression, and grief.

The written materials must provide guidance on (1) identifying the signs and symptoms of the mental health conditions and (2) assisting employees who are veterans who exhibit the signs and symptoms in the workplace.

The board (1) must distribute the materials to employers participating or eligible to participate in either pilot program created under the act and (2) may distribute them to other employers that may hire veterans.

### § 4 — DOL'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS

The act requires DOL to provide certain information to veterans who contact the department for employment or workforce development services. More specifically, if the department determines that the veteran lives closer to a workforce development board facility with a veterans unit than to a DOL facility offering employment or workforce development assistance, it must provide the veteran with the board's contact information. And if the veteran expresses an interest in advanced manufacturing and may be eligible for the Military to Machinists pilot program, it must provide the veteran with the program's information.

### BACKGROUND

#### *Veterans' Charitable Organizations*

By law, a "qualified veterans' charitable organization" is one that (1) holds itself out to be established for a benevolent, educational, philanthropic, humane, scientific, patriotic, social welfare, or advocacy purpose relating to or on behalf of veterans and (2) has been a Connecticut nonstock corporation for at least three years or a 501(c) tax exempt organization for at least three consecutive years. The Veterans Affairs Department maintains and publishes a list of qualified veterans' charitable organizations.