



General Assembly

January Session, 2021

Substitute Bill No. 914



AN ACT CONCERNING HMONG LAOTIAN SPECIAL GUERRILLA UNITS WHICH SERVED IN THE KINGDOM OF LAOS.

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

1 Section 1. Section 14-20b of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at the request of any veteran
4 or member of the armed forces or the surviving spouse of such veteran
5 or member, shall register any motor vehicle owned or leased for a period
6 of at least one year by such person and shall issue a special certificate of
7 registration and a set of number plates for each such motor vehicle,
8 including a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates
9 for any motor vehicle used exclusively for farming purposes by any
10 such veteran or member of the armed forces, or the surviving spouse of
11 such veteran or member, who is engaged in agricultural production as
12 a trade or business. The plates shall expire and be renewed as provided
13 in section 14-22. The commissioner shall charge a fee for such plates,
14 which fee shall cover the entire cost of making such plates and shall be
15 in addition to the fee for registration of such motor vehicle. As used in
16 this subsection, ["member of the armed forces"] "armed forces" has the
17 same meaning as provided in section 27-103 and "veteran" means any
18 person (1) honorably discharged from, or released under honorable
19 conditions from active service in, the armed forces, or (2) with a

20 qualifying condition, as defined in section 27-103, who has received a
21 discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active service in
22 the armed forces.

23 (b) (1) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at the request of any
24 person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units,
25 which units served in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of
26 Laos during the Vietnam War, or the surviving spouse of such person,
27 and after verification from the Department of Veterans Affairs as
28 provided under subdivision (2) of this subsection, shall register any
29 motor vehicle owned or leased for a period of at least one year by such
30 person and shall issue a special certificate of registration and a set of
31 number plates for each such motor vehicle, including a special certificate
32 of registration and a set of number plates for any motor vehicle used
33 exclusively for farming purposes by any such person, or the surviving
34 spouse of such person, who is engaged in agricultural production as a
35 trade or business. The plates shall expire and be renewed as provided
36 in section 14-22. The commissioner shall charge a fee for such plates,
37 which fee shall cover the entire cost of making such plates and shall be
38 in addition to the fee for registration of such motor vehicle.

39 (2) Any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special
40 guerilla units, or the surviving spouse of such person, may submit a
41 request to the Department of Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran,
42 based on such service, for the purpose of obtaining a special certificate
43 of registration and a set of number plates under subdivision (1) of this
44 subsection. Such person, or the surviving spouse of such person, shall
45 provide to said department (A) an affidavit stating (i) when such person
46 served, (ii) where such person served, (iii) the unit in which such person
47 served, and (iv) the capacity in which such person served; (B) any
48 available corroborating witness affidavits; (C) any available official
49 documentation of service; and (D) any other documents supporting
50 such person's or such surviving spouse's affidavit. Said department
51 shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such request, verify
52 whether such person was a member of the Hmong Laotian special

53 guerilla units and, if so, notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of
54 such request and verification.

55 [(b)] (c) Any such member of the armed forces who is dishonorably
56 discharged shall return such plates to the commissioner not later than
57 thirty days after such discharge. The commissioner shall not renew such
58 plates for any motor vehicle owned or leased by any such member of
59 the armed forces who is dishonorably discharged.

60 Sec. 2. Section 14-36h of the general statutes is repealed and the
61 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

62 (a) Each motor vehicle operator's license issued by the Commissioner
63 of Motor Vehicles in accordance with section 14-36 and each identity
64 card issued by said commissioner in accordance with section 1-1h shall
65 contain the following: (1) The person's full legal name; (2) the person's
66 date of birth; (3) the person's gender; (4) the person's height and eye
67 color; (5) the person's assigned operator's license or identity card
68 number; (6) the person's address of principal residence in this state; (7)
69 the person's signature; (8) the person's photograph or digital image; and
70 (9) if applicable, the person's status as a veteran, as provided in
71 [subsection] subsections (e) and (f) of this section.

72 (b) If any person does not reside in any state, territory or possession
73 of the United States because such person is on active military duty with
74 the United States Armed Forces, and such person's home state of record
75 is Connecticut, as reflected in the records of the Department of Defense,
76 Department of Homeland Security or any department under which the
77 United States Coast Guard operates, such person may obtain a
78 Connecticut operator's license or identity card, provided such person:
79 (1) Does not have an operator's license or identity card issued by another
80 state, territory or possession of the United States, or surrenders any such
81 license or identity card; (2) has a current APO or FPO mailing address;
82 (3) designates such person's home address as 60 State Street,
83 Wethersfield, CT 06161; and (4) meets all other requirements for
84 obtaining an operator's license or identity card in this state.

85 (c) The commissioner shall provide that each such license or identity
86 card document contains physical security features designed to prevent
87 tampering, counterfeiting or duplication of the document.

88 (d) Each such document shall also contain one or more machine-
89 readable technology feature or component, including, but not limited to,
90 a bar code or magnetic strip.

91 (e) Any person who is a veteran may submit a request to the
92 Department of Veterans Affairs to have his or her status as a veteran
93 contained on his or her motor vehicle operator's license or identity card.
94 Said department shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such
95 request, verify whether such person is a veteran and, if so, notify the
96 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request and verification. The
97 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall indicate such person's status as a
98 veteran on any motor vehicle operator's license or identity card issued
99 to such person upon original issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle
100 operator's license or identity card or upon issuance of a duplicate motor
101 vehicle operator's license or identity card.

102 (f) (1) Any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special
103 guerilla units, which units served in the United States secret war in the
104 Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War, may submit a request to the
105 Department of Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran, based on such
106 service, on his or her motor vehicle operator's license or identity card.
107 Said department shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such
108 request and the documents required under subdivision (2) of this
109 subsection, verify whether such person was such a member and, if so,
110 notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request and
111 verification. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall indicate such
112 person's status as a veteran on any motor vehicle operator's license or
113 identity card issued to such person upon original issuance or renewal of
114 a motor vehicle operator's license or identity card or upon issuance of a
115 duplicate motor vehicle operator's license or identity card.

116 (2) Any such person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian

117 special guerilla units shall submit to the Department of Veterans Affairs,
118 in addition to the request under subdivision (1) of this subsection, (A)
119 an affidavit stating (i) when such person served, (ii) where such person
120 served, (iii) the unit in which such person served, and (iv) the capacity
121 in which such person served; (B) any available corroborating witness
122 affidavits; (C) any available official documentation of service; and (D)
123 any other documents supporting such person's affidavit.

124 ~~[(f)]~~ (g) As used in this section: (1) "Full legal name" means the most
125 complete version of the name that appears on a person's certificate of
126 birth, official passport or other document or documents accepted by the
127 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to verify the person's identity, unless
128 the person presents a marriage license or certificate, a certificate of civil
129 union, a divorce decree or an order of a court of competent jurisdiction
130 pertaining to a permanent change of the person's name; and (2)
131 "veteran" means (A) any person honorably discharged from, or released
132 under honorable conditions from active service in, the armed forces, as
133 defined in section 27-103, (B) any former member of the armed forces
134 who is entitled to retirement pay under 10 USC Chapter 1223, as
135 amended from time to time, or, but for age, would be so entitled, or (C)
136 any person with a qualifying condition, as defined in section 27-103,
137 who has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable
138 from active service in the armed forces.

139 Sec. 3. Section 27-118 of the general statutes is repealed and the
140 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

141 (a) When any veteran or member, as defined in subsection (e) of this
142 section, dies, not having sufficient estate to pay the necessary expenses
143 of the veteran's or member's last sickness and burial, as determined by
144 the commissioner after consultation with the probate court for the
145 district in which the veteran or member resided, the state shall pay the
146 sum of one thousand eight hundred dollars toward such funeral
147 expenses, and the burial shall be in some cemetery or plot not used
148 exclusively for the burial of the pauper dead, and the same amount shall
149 be paid if the body is cremated, but no amount shall be paid for the

150 expenses for burial or cremation unless claim therefor is made within
151 one year from the date of death, except that in cases of death occurring
152 abroad, such claim may be made within one year after the remains of
153 such veteran or member have been interred in this country. No
154 provision of this section shall prevent the payment of the sum above
155 named for the burial of any person, otherwise entitled to the same, on
156 account of such burial being made outside the limits of this state.

157 (b) Upon satisfactory proof by the person who has paid or provided
158 for the funeral or burial expense to the commissioner of the identity of
159 the deceased veteran, the time and place of the deceased's death and
160 burial and the approval thereof by the commissioner, [said] the sum of
161 one thousand eight hundred dollars shall be paid by the Comptroller to
162 the person who has paid the funeral or burial expense or, upon
163 assignment by such person, to the funeral director who has provided
164 the funeral.

165 (c) (1) Upon satisfactory proof by the person who has paid or
166 provided for the funeral or burial expense to the commissioner of the
167 identity of the deceased member, the time and place of the deceased
168 member's death and burial and the approval thereof by the
169 commissioner, the sum of one thousand eight hundred dollars shall be
170 paid by the Comptroller to the person who has paid the funeral or burial
171 expense, or upon assignment by such person, to the funeral director
172 who has provided the funeral.

173 (2) The person who has paid or provided for the funeral or burial
174 expense shall provide to the commissioner (A) an affidavit stating (i)
175 when the deceased member served, (ii) where the deceased member
176 served, (iii) the unit in which the deceased member served, and (iv) the
177 capacity in which the deceased member served; (B) any available
178 corroborating witness affidavits; (C) any available official
179 documentation of service; and (D) any other documents supporting the
180 affidavit.

181 (d) Whenever the Comptroller has lawfully paid any sum toward the

182 expenses of the burial of any deceased veteran or member and it
183 afterwards appears that the deceased left any estate, the Comptroller
184 may present a claim on behalf of the state against the estate of such
185 deceased veteran or member for the sum so paid, and the claim shall be
186 a preferred claim against such estate and shall be paid to the Treasurer
187 of the state. The commissioner, upon the advice of the Attorney General,
188 may make application for administration upon the estate of any such
189 deceased veteran or member if no other person authorized by law
190 makes such application within sixty days after such payment has been
191 made by the Comptroller.

192 (e) As used in this section, (1) "veteran" means any person [(1)] (A)
193 honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions
194 from active service in, the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, or
195 [(2)] (B) with a qualifying condition, as defined in said section, who has
196 received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active
197 service in the armed forces, and (2) "member" means any person who
198 served in the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units, which units served
199 in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the
200 Vietnam War.

201 Sec. 4. Section 27-122b of the general statutes is repealed and the
202 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

203 (a) As used in this section, "veteran" means any person (1) honorably
204 discharged from, or released under honorable conditions from, active
205 service in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or
206 Coast Guard or any women's auxiliary branch thereof, organized
207 pursuant to an Act of Congress; (2) who has completed at least twenty
208 years of qualifying service, as described in and computed under 10 USC
209 Chapter 1223, as amended from time to time, in the Connecticut
210 National Guard; or (3) who was killed in action, or who died as a result
211 of accident or illness sustained while performing active service, in the
212 United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard or
213 any women's auxiliary branch thereof, organized pursuant to an Act of
214 Congress, or in the Connecticut National Guard.

215 (b) (1) Any veteran may, by letter or other communication addressed
216 to the commissioner, or by will, request that upon his or her death his
217 or her body be buried in a veterans' cemetery established pursuant to
218 section 27-122a, or (2) the spouse or other next of kin may apply to the
219 commissioner to have the body of such veteran buried in said veterans'
220 cemetery, and in either case such request shall be granted.

221 (c) (1) Any member or former member of the armed forces, as defined
222 in subsection (a) of section 27-103, who is a resident of this state and is
223 entitled to retirement pay under 10 USC Chapter 1223, as amended from
224 time to time, or would have been entitled to retirement pay under said
225 chapter, but for the fact that the person is under sixty years of age, may
226 by letter or other communication addressed to the commissioner, or by
227 will, request that his or her body will be buried in said veterans'
228 cemetery, or (2) the spouse or other next of kin may apply to the
229 commissioner to have the body of such member or former member
230 buried in said veterans' cemetery, and, in either case, such request shall
231 be granted.

232 (d) (1) (A) Any person who served in the Hmong Laotian special
233 guerilla units, which units served in the United States secret war in the
234 Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War, may, by letter or other
235 communication addressed to the commissioner, or by will, request that
236 upon his or her death his or her body be buried in a veterans' cemetery
237 established pursuant to section 27-122a, or (B) the spouse or other next
238 of kin may apply to the commissioner to have the body of such person
239 buried in said veterans' cemetery, and in either case such request shall
240 be granted.

241 (2) Such person who served in the Hmong Laotian special guerilla
242 units, or the spouse or next of kin of such person, shall provide to the
243 commissioner (A) an affidavit stating (i) when the person served, (ii)
244 where the person served, (iii) the unit in which the person served, and
245 (iv) the capacity in which the person served; (B) any available
246 corroborating witness affidavits; (C) any available official
247 documentation of service; and (D) any other documents supporting the

248 affidavit.

249 ~~[(d)]~~ (e) The spouse of any veteran, or the spouse of any person who
250 served in the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units described in
251 subsection (d) of this section, shall, upon similar request or application
252 made to the commissioner, be buried in said veterans' cemetery
253 provided only one such request or application shall be granted.

254 ~~[(e)]~~ (f) The commissioner shall designate an area in said veterans'
255 cemetery for veterans and any persons who served in the Hmong
256 Laotian special guerilla units described in subsection (d) of this section
257 who, for religious reasons, require burial in a consecrated area.

258 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2021*) (a) The Commissioner of
259 Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Adjutant General, shall award
260 a ribbon and medal to each member who is a resident of this state and
261 who provides to the Department of Veterans Affairs (1) an affidavit
262 stating (A) when such person served, (B) where such person served, (C)
263 the unit in which such person served, and (D) the capacity in which such
264 person served; (2) any available corroborating witness affidavits; (3) any
265 available official documentation of service; and (4) any other documents
266 supporting such person's affidavit. As used in this section, "member"
267 means a person who served in the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units,
268 which units served in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of
269 Laos during the Vietnam War.

270 (b) The commissioner, in consultation with the Adjutant General,
271 shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54
272 of the general statutes, setting forth the process for designing the ribbon
273 and medal, identifying such members under this section and
274 establishing procedures for distributing the ribbon and medal to each
275 such member.

276 (c) The cost of the ribbons and medals shall be paid from the funds
277 appropriated to the military assistance account within the Military
278 Department. Within existing budgetary resources, awards under this

