



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 223

February Session, 2022

Senate Bill No. 343

Senate, March 30, 2022

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs reported through SEN. CABRERA of the 17th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING A MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY WORKING GROUP AND A GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN LICENSING, CERTIFICATION, REGISTRATION OR TUITION FEES.

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

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a working
2 group to (1) reexamine the study conducted by the military occupational
3 specialty task force established pursuant to special act 13-5, (2) review
4 the efficacy of the legislative changes enacted in public act 14-131 as a
5 result of such study, and (3) identify areas for improvement in achieving
6 the purpose of such task force to aid veterans in securing employment.

7 (b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

8 (1) The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, or the commissioner's
9 designee;

10 (2) The Adjutant General of the Military Department, or the Adjutant
11 General's designee;

12 (3) The executive director of the Office of Military Affairs, or the
13 executive director's designee;

14 (4) The Labor Commissioner, or the commissioner's designee;

15 (5) The president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, or the
16 president's designee;

17 (6) The chairperson of the Board of Trustees for The University of
18 Connecticut, or the chairperson's designee;

19 (7) The executive director of the Office of Higher Education, or the
20 executive director's designee;

21 (8) The Commissioner of Consumer Protection, or the commissioner's
22 designee;

23 (9) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;

24 (10) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

25 (11) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

26 (12) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
27 Representatives;

28 (13) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

29 (14) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
30 Representatives; and

31 (15) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

32 (c) All appointments to the working group shall be made not later
33 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
34 be filled by the appointing authority.

35 (d) The members appointed by the speaker of the House of
36 Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall be the
37 chairpersons of the working group. Such chairpersons shall schedule

38 the first meeting of the working group, which shall be held not later than
39 sixty days after the effective date of this section.

40 (e) Not later than January 1, 2023, the working group shall submit a
41 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing
42 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
43 relating to veterans' affairs, in accordance with the provisions of section
44 11-4a of the general statutes. The working group shall terminate on the
45 date that it submits such report or January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

46 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) Not later than January 1, 2023,
47 the Commissioner of Consumer Protection, in consultation with the
48 Labor Commissioner and the executive director of the Technical
49 Education and Career System, shall establish a grant program through
50 which any veteran in this state, and any person sponsoring an
51 apprenticeship program in which any such veteran participates, may
52 apply for reimbursement of licensure, certification, registration or
53 tuition fees associated with occupations, apprenticeships or trade
54 programs within the jurisdiction of boards or councils in the
55 Department of Consumer Protection or Labor Department, as
56 applicable. As used in this section, "veteran" has the same meaning as
57 provided in section 27-103 of the general statutes.

58 (b) The following shall be eligible for reimbursement through the
59 grant program established in this section:

60 (1) Any fee paid to the Department of Consumer Protection by a
61 veteran for any (A) examination, (B) initial licensure or certification, or
62 (C) annual renewal for the five years immediately following such initial
63 licensure or certification;

64 (2) Any fee paid to the Labor Department by a person sponsoring an
65 apprenticeship program for any apprentice who (A) participates in such
66 program, and (B) is a veteran; and

67 (3) Up to one thousand dollars, in the aggregate, in tuition fees
68 charged by the Technical Education and Career System board for a

69 student who is a veteran, and paid to said board by (A) such veteran, or
70 (B) the person sponsoring an apprenticeship program in which such
71 veteran participates.

72 (c) The Commissioner of Consumer Protection, in consultation with
73 the Labor Commissioner and the executive director of the Technical
74 Education and Career System, shall prescribe the manner in which
75 eligible veterans or persons sponsoring apprenticeship programs shall
76 apply for reimbursement through the grant program established in this
77 section.

78 (d) Not later than January 1, 2024, and every six months thereafter,
79 the Commissioner of Consumer Protection, the Labor Commissioner
80 and the executive director of the Technical Education and Career System
81 shall jointly submit a report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the
82 general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General
83 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to veterans' affairs.
84 Such report shall contain (1) information detailing the number of
85 applications approved, and the total amount reimbursed, under the
86 grant program established in this section, and (2) recommendations for
87 legislation to address any areas for improvement in the administration
88 of such grant program that have been identified in such report.

89 Sec. 3. (Effective July 1, 2022) The sum of one hundred thousand
90 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Consumer Protection from
91 the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, for the grant
92 program established in section 2 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section

VA Joint Favorable

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 23 \$	FY 24 \$
Consumer Protection, Dept.	GF - Cost	192,500	See Below
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	30,398	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to establish a grant program to reimburse veterans for certain licensing, certification, registration fees, and tuition resulting in a total cost to the state of \$222,898 in FY 23.

DCP will have to hire a duration project manager in FY 23 (\$107,898 for salary and fringe benefits) to run the grant program and will incur overtime costs of approximately \$15,000 for existing employees to create the online infrastructure for the program. The bill also appropriates \$100,000 from the General Fund in FY 23 to fund the grant program. The bill is unclear if the grant program is only for one year or is ongoing. To the extent the program is ongoing, the costs identified in FY 23 (outside of the overtime costs for the creation of the online infrastructure) would continue subject to the number of reimbursements.

Section 1 of the bill creates a working group which results in no fiscal impact to the state. This section has no fiscal impact as PA 17-236

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.53% of payroll in FY 23.

prohibits transportation allowances for working group members.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the continuation of the grant program.

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 343*****AN ACT CONCERNING A MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY WORKING GROUP AND A GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN LICENSING, CERTIFICATION, REGISTRATION OR TUITION FEES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to establish a grant program, by January 1, 2023, to reimburse veterans and their apprenticeship program sponsors for certain occupational licensing, certification, and registration fees and tuition. It also (1) appropriates \$100,000 from the General Fund to DCP for the program for FY 23 and (2) requires DCP to establish the program in consultation with the Department of Labor (DOL) and Technical Education and Career System (TECS).

The bill also establishes a 15-member working group to reexamine the military occupational specialty task force's 2014 findings and resulting legislative changes and identify more ways to help veterans find jobs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022, except the provision establishing a working group is effective upon passage.

VETERAN OCCUPATIONAL FEE GRANT PROGRAM

The bill requires the DCP commissioner, in consultation with the DOL commissioner and TECS executive director, to start a grant program that allows veterans and apprenticeship programs that sponsor veterans to apply for reimbursement of certain fees they paid. (It is unclear if the reimbursements are available regardless of when the fees were paid or if they only apply for fees paid moving forward.)

Under it, veterans may apply for fees they paid to:

1. DCP for their (a) examinations, (b) initial licensing or certification, or (c) annual renewal fees for the five years after their initial licensing or certification; and
2. TECS for tuition, up to \$1,000.

Apprenticeship program sponsors may apply for fees they paid to:

1. DOL for veterans who participate in the apprenticeship program, and
2. TECS for tuition, up to \$1,000, on behalf of a veteran who participates in the sponsor's apprenticeship program.

The bill requires the DCP and DOL commissioners and TECS executive director to determine how applications must be submitted to the program. They must also submit a report to the Veterans' Affairs Committee, by January 1, 2024, and every six months after, on (1) the number of approved applications and total reimbursement amount and (2) recommendations for legislation to improve the grant program's administration.

Under the bill, a "veteran" is anyone discharged or released from active service in the U.S. Armed Forces honorably, under honorable conditions, or with an other than honorable (OTH) discharge based on a qualifying condition (i.e., diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, disclosed military sexual trauma, or determination that sexual orientation or gender identity or expression was more likely than not the primary reason for the OTH discharge).

MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY TASK FORCE WORKING GROUP

In 2013, the legislature established a military occupational specialty task force to study whether veterans' military training experience could satisfy state licensing training requirements, and required it to submit its findings to the Veterans' Affairs Committee, which it did in 2014 (SA 13-5). In response to the study, the legislature adopted legislation requiring various government entities to waive or modify certain

occupational, training, or educational requirements and fees for veterans with military experience or qualifications similar to those otherwise required (PA 14-131).

Working Group Membership

The working group the bill establishes includes the following members:

1. Department of Veterans Affairs commissioner, or his designee;
2. Military Department Adjutant General, or his designee;
3. Office of Military Affairs executive director, or his designee;
4. DOL, DCP, and Department of Education commissioners, or their designees;
5. Department of Higher Education Board of Regent's president, or the president's designee;
6. Office of Higher Education's executive director, or his designee;
7. UConn Board of Trustees' chairperson or the chairperson's designee; and
8. six members, one each appointed by the House and Senate majority and minority leaders, Senate president pro tempore, and House speaker.

The bill requires appointing authorities to make initial appointments within 30 days after the bill's passage and fill any vacancies. Under the bill, the House speaker's and Senate president pro tempore's appointees are the task force chairpersons. The chairpersons must schedule the first meeting, which must be held no later than 60 days after the bill's passage.

Reporting & Termination

Under the bill, the working group must submit its findings and recommendations by January 1, 2023, to the Veterans' Affairs

Committee. The working group terminates on that date or when it submits its report, whichever is later.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 16 Nay 0 (03/15/2022)