



Substitute House Bill No. 5367

Public Act No. 22-34

AN ACT CONCERNING MOTOR VEHICLE MARKER PLATES FOR CERTAIN VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS, MUNICIPAL VETERANS SERVICES, VETERANS-RELATED PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AND TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO VETERANS' AND MILITARY AFFAIRS STATUTES.

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

Section 1. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 14-20d of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" ^z [means any person (1) honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions from active service in, the armed forces, or (2) with a qualifying condition, as defined in section 27-103, who has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active service in the armed forces, and "period of war" and] "armed forces" and "period of war" have the same meanings as provided in section 27-103, as amended by this act.

(b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall, at the request of any veteran or member of the armed forces who received a campaign medal, issue special registration marker plates to indicate service during a period of war. Such plates shall bear the words "(Name of War) Veteran"

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and shall be designed in consultation with the Commissioner of [Veteran] Veterans Affairs. The plates shall expire and be renewed as provided in section 14-22. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall charge a fee for such plates, which fee shall cover the entire cost of making such plates and shall be in addition to the fee for registration of such motor vehicle. No use shall be made of such plates except as official registration marker plates.

Sec. 2. Subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of section 27-103 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(a) As used in the general statutes, except chapter 504, and except as otherwise provided: (1) "Armed forces" means the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force and any reserve component thereof, including the Connecticut National Guard performing duty as provided in Title 32 of the United States Code, as amended from time to time; (2) "veteran" means any person honorably discharged from, released under honorable conditions from or released with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying condition from, active service in, the armed forces; (3) "service in time of war" means service of ninety or more cumulative days during a period of war unless separated from service earlier because of an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty or a service-connected disability rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, except that if the period of war lasted less than ninety days, "service in time of war" means service for the entire period of war unless separated because of any such injury or disability; (4) "period of war" has the same meaning as provided in 38 USC 101, as amended from time to time, except that the "Vietnam Era" means the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on July 1, 1975, in all cases; and "period of war" shall include service while engaged in combat or a combat support role in Lebanon, July 1, 1958, to November 1, 1958, or September 29, 1982, to March 30,

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1984; Grenada, October 25, 1983, to December 15, 1983; Operation Earnest Will, involving the escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers flying the United States flag in the Persian Gulf, July 24, 1987, to August 1, 1990; [and] Panama, December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990; Afghanistan, October 24, 2001, to August 30, 2021; and Iraq, March 19, 2003, to December 31, 2011, or June 1, 2014, to December 9, 2021, and shall include service during such periods with the armed forces of any government associated with the United States; and (5) "qualifying condition" means (A) a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury made by an individual licensed to provide health care services at a United States Department of Veterans Affairs facility, (B) an experience of military sexual trauma, as described in 38 USC 1720D, as amended from time to time, disclosed to an individual licensed to provide health care services at a United States Department of Veterans Affairs facility, or (C) a determination that sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression was more likely than not the primary reason for an other than honorable discharge, as determined in accordance with subsections (c) and (d) of this section.

(b) As used in this part, "Veterans Residential Services facility" means the Veterans Residential Services facility in Rocky Hill maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides temporary and other supported residential services for qualifying veterans; "long-term care facility" means a facility that has been federally certified as a skilled nursing facility or intermediate care facility; "Healthcare Center" means the long-term care facility in Rocky Hill maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs; "veteran" means any veteran, as defined in subsection (a) of this section, who is a resident of this state; "eligible dependent" means any parent, wife or husband, or child of a veteran who has no adequate means of support; and "eligible family member" means any parent, brother or sister, wife or husband, or child or children under eighteen years of age, of any veteran whose cooperation in the program is integral to the treatment of the veteran.

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(c) Not later than October 1, 2021, the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall establish a Qualifying Review Board, which shall review applications of veterans submitted under subsection (d) of this section. Said board shall be part of the Executive Department and shall consist of five voting members who, by education or experience, shall be knowledgeable of veterans benefits and programs and who shall have a demonstrated interest in the concerns of veterans. A majority of the members of the board shall be veterans.

(1) The membership of the board shall consist of the following members:

(A) One member appointed by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs in consultation with the chairperson of the Board of Trustees for the Department of Veterans Affairs, [Board of Trustees,] who shall be a member of said board;

(B) The manager of the Office of Advocacy and Assistance within the Department of Veterans Affairs, [Office of Advocacy and Assistance,] or the manager's designee; and

(C) Three members appointed by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs.

(2) All initial appointments to the board shall be made not later than December 1, 2021, and shall terminate on November [31] 30, 2023, or November [31] 30, 2024, as applicable, regardless of when the initial appointment was made. Any member of the board may serve more than one term.

(3) Members first appointed shall have the following terms: (A) The member of the Board of Trustees for the Department of Veterans Affairs [Board of Trustees] and the manager of the Office of Advocacy and Assistance within the Department of Veterans Affairs, [Office of Advocacy and Assistance,] or the manager's designee, shall initially

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serve a term of three years, and (B) the three members appointed by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall initially serve a term of two years. Members shall serve a term of four years thereafter. Members shall continue to serve until their successors are appointed.

(4) Any vacancy shall be filled by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. Any vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of section 4-9a, the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall select the chairperson of the board from among the members of the board. Such chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the board, which shall be held not later than January 1, 2022.

(6) A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business.

(7) The members of the board shall serve without compensation.

(8) The board shall meet at least monthly or as often as deemed necessary by the chairperson based on the number of applications pending before the board.

Sec. 3. Section 27-118 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(a) When any veteran or member, as those terms are defined in subsection [(e)] (g) of this section, dies, not having sufficient estate to pay the necessary expenses of the veteran's or member's last sickness and funeral expenses, as determined by the [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs after consultation with the probate court for the district in which the veteran or member resided, the state shall pay the sum of one thousand eight hundred dollars toward such

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funeral expenses.

(b) Burial shall be in [some] a cemetery or plot not used exclusively for the burial of the pauper dead.

(c) No amount shall be paid for funeral expenses unless claim therefor is made [within one year from] not later than one year after the date of death, except that in cases of death occurring abroad [,] such claim may be made within one year after the remains of [such] the veteran or member have been interred in this country. No provision of this section shall prevent the payment of the sum under subsection (a) of this section for funeral expenses on account of the burial of [such] the veteran or member being made outside the limits of this state.

(d) Upon satisfactory proof to the commissioner, by the person who has paid or provided for the funeral expenses [to the commissioner] of a deceased veteran, of the identity of the [deceased] veteran, the time and place of the [deceased's] veteran's death and burial and the approval thereof by the commissioner, the sum under subsection (a) of this section shall be paid by the Comptroller to [the] such person who has paid or provided for the funeral expenses.

(e) (1) Upon satisfactory proof to the commissioner, by the person who has paid or provided for the funeral [or burial expense to the commissioner] expenses of a deceased member, of the identity of the [deceased] member, the time and place of the [deceased] member's death and burial and the approval thereof by the commissioner, the sum [of one thousand eight hundred dollars] under subsection (a) of this section shall be paid by the Comptroller to the person who has paid or provided for the funeral [or burial expense, or upon assignment by such person, to the funeral director who has provided the funeral] expenses.

(2) The person who has paid or provided for the funeral [or burial expense] expenses of a deceased member shall provide to the

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commissioner (A) an affidavit stating (i) when the [deceased] member served, (ii) where the [deceased] member served, (iii) the unit in which the [deceased] member served, and (iv) the capacity in which the [deceased] member served; (B) any available corroborating witness affidavits; (C) any available official documentation of service; and (D) any other documents supporting the affidavit.

(f) Whenever the Comptroller has lawfully paid any sum toward the funeral expenses of any deceased veteran or member and it afterwards appears that the [deceased] veteran or member left any estate, the Comptroller may present a claim on behalf of the state against the estate of such [deceased] veteran or member for the sum so paid, and the claim shall be a preferred claim against such estate and shall be paid to the Treasurer. [of the state.] The commissioner, upon the advice of the Attorney General, may make application for administration upon the estate of any such [deceased] veteran or member if no other person authorized by law makes such application within sixty days after such payment has been made by the Comptroller.

(g) As used in this section, (1) "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, as amended by this act, (2) "member" means any person who served in the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units, which units served in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War, and (3) "funeral expenses" means (A) the cash advances paid by the funeral director and the cost of funeral services and funeral merchandise, (B) the cost of burial, cremation or disposition, and (C) the cost of publication of an obituary. "Funeral merchandise" includes, but is not limited to, alternative containers, caskets, urns, vaults and outer burial containers.

Sec. 4. Section 27-82 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

The [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs is authorized

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to administer the separation allowances provided for by this chapter and enforce the provisions relating thereto. The commissioner shall determine the amount of such separation allowances to be paid and shall certify to the Comptroller the amounts to be paid monthly. The Comptroller shall draw his orders on the Treasurer in payment thereof. The commissioner may apply the provisions of sections 27-80 to 27-85, inclusive, to any person who enters the military or naval service of the United States through the provisions of any system of selective draft adopted by the federal government.

Sec. 5. Section 27-86 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

Whenever the provisions of this chapter relating to separation allowances become operative through the calling of the National Guard or other forces into active service, the [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall pay such allowances as are to be paid out of any funds which the state may have available for such purposes and, if no funds are available, the State Treasurer is authorized to borrow, in the name of the state, on notes, such funds as are necessary to administer such provisions. In either case said commissioner shall certify to the General Assembly at its next regular session the amount expended, or, if such provisions are at that time operative, shall certify to the amount expended under them up to and including the first Wednesday of December preceding the convening of the General Assembly, and in either case the General Assembly shall appropriate sufficient funds to cover such expenditures; and, in the event of the existence of circumstances making such provisions still operative, the General Assembly shall take the necessary steps to provide for the requisite expense.

Sec. 6. Section 27-102m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

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The [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, in his or her discretion, shall investigate all complaints made to the commissioner with respect to the conduct or treatment of veterans, their spouses, or eligible dependents and family members receiving services under this chapter, or any program administered by the [department] Department of Veterans Affairs and for such purpose shall have power to compel the attendance of witnesses under oath. If upon the completion of such investigation, the commissioner finds that any veteran, spouse or eligible dependent has not received proper care or has been [ill treated] ill-treated or abused by any officer or employee, the commissioner shall, in his or her discretion, cause the offender to be prosecuted, disciplined or dismissed and shall order such remedial action as the commissioner deems necessary to eliminate the condition. If upon such investigation, the commissioner finds that no adequate grounds exist for such complaint, the commissioner shall certify that fact to the officer or employee involved and cause such officer's or employee's record to be cleared of the incident.

Sec. 7. Section 27-106 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(a) The [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall adopt and enforce such rules as may be necessary to ensure order, enforce discipline and preserve the health and ensure the comfort of the residents in the Veterans Residential Services facility and patients in the Healthcare Center, and shall discipline or dismiss any officer or resident of said facility or patient in the Healthcare Center who violates such rules. The commissioner shall (1) appoint, subject to the provisions of chapter 67, such officers and employees as are necessary for the administration of the affairs of said facility and the Healthcare Center, (2) prescribe the relative rank, if any, of such officers and employees, and (3) commission each such officer, who shall wear such uniform, if any, as is prescribed by the commissioner.

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(b) The chief fiscal officer shall submit a semiannual plain language report to each resident of the Veterans Residential Services facility and patient of the Healthcare Center detailing the manner in which the institutional general welfare fund was used over the previous six months to directly benefit veterans, said facility or the Healthcare Center. Such report shall include a prominently displayed statement encouraging residents to submit suggestions for projects to be funded by the institutional general welfare fund and a form for such submissions.

(c) The chief fiscal officer shall submit an itemized list of expenditures made from the institutional general welfare fund to the commissioner at intervals not greater than two months. Such list shall include all such expenditures made during the two-month period preceding its submission. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 4-56, the commissioner shall prescribe procedures to limit and specify the uses for which expenditures may be made from the institutional general welfare fund so that only expenditures that, in the opinion of the commissioner and the [board of trustees] Board of Trustees for the [department] Department of Veterans Affairs appointed pursuant to section 27-102n, directly benefit veterans, the Veterans Residential Services facility or the Healthcare Center are permitted.

(d) In addition to the estimate of expenditure requirements required under section 4-77, the commissioner shall submit an accounting of all planned expenditures for the next fiscal year from the institutional general welfare fund to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies at the time such estimate is submitted.

(e) The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall annually hold suitable exercises in the Veterans Residential Services facility on November eleventh recognizing resident veterans for their military service.

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Sec. 8. Section 27-109 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

Any hospital, upon request of the [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, shall furnish any veteran, determined by the commissioner to be entitled to admission thereto, necessary food, clothing, care and treatment therein at the expense of the state, unless other funds or means of payment are available, and such veteran shall have preference for admission into such hospital. As used in this section, "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, as amended by this act.

Sec. 9. Section 27-119a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

The [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall, upon application made by the chief executive authority of the town, city or borough wherein the deceased is buried, cause a metal marker and flag holder to be placed on the grave of any person who, in time of war, served in the military or naval forces of the English colonies in America, prior to 1776, or who served in the military or naval forces of the United States in the Revolutionary War, which grave is not so marked.

Sec. 10. Section 27-120 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

If any person who, in time of war, served in the military or naval forces of the English colonies in America, prior to 1776, or of the state of Connecticut or in the armed forces of the United States, and was credited to said colonies, state or the United States, died during such service of disease or wounds, or was killed in action, died in prison or was lost at sea, and whose body was never brought home for interment, or who was reported missing in action and has not been heard from, the

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[commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall, upon proper application, with satisfactory proof, made by the chief executive authority of the municipality of which the deceased was a resident, as to his identity and honorable service, cause to be erected in any cemetery or public place in such municipality, at a cost to the state of not more than fifty dollars, a marker or soldier's headstone, having inscribed thereon the name of such person, the organization to which he belonged, and the place of his death or burial or when he was reported as missing in action or lost at sea.

Sec. 11. Section 27-121 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

If the chief executive authority of any municipality which had as residents several veterans who were killed or lost as described in section 27-120, as amended by this act, and to whose memory markers or headstones have not already been erected, prefers a memorial stone or plaque with the names of all such veterans inscribed thereon, erected in a public place or cemetery in such municipality, the [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall cause such a suitable memorial to be erected in such municipality, which memorial shall be of such design and material and of such cost as the commissioner determines. If any municipality, organization or person contributes toward the erection of such memorial, the location of the same shall be determined by the commissioner and a committee of two persons appointed by the municipality, organization or individuals making such contribution. Any such memorial may include the names of any veterans who died or were killed in action as described in [said] section 27-120, as amended by this act, and whose bodies have been brought home for interment whenever the municipality wherein such memorial is to be erected, or any organization or person, agrees with the commissioner to share proportionately the cost of erecting such memorial.

Sec. 12. Subsection (b) of section 27-122b of the 2022 supplement to

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the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(b) (1) Any veteran may, by letter or other communication addressed to the [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, or by will, request that upon his or her death his or her body be buried in a veterans' cemetery established pursuant to section 27-122a, as amended by this act, or (2) the spouse or other next of kin may apply to the commissioner to have the body of such veteran buried in said veterans' cemetery, and in either case such request shall be granted.

Sec. 13. Section 27-125 of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

Any veteran who is a citizen of this state and who, through disability or other causes incident to service in the armed forces in time of war, is in need of temporary financial assistance may be provided for by the [commissioner] Commissioner of Veterans Affairs by a method similar to that provided in section 27-82, as amended by this act, the amount and continuance of such assistance to be discretionary with the commissioner. The widow, widower and each child, parent, brother or sister of any member of the armed forces, who died while in such active service, may be assisted by the commissioner if such person or persons are without sufficient means of support by reason of the death of such member of the armed forces. In carrying out his or her duties under the provisions of this section, the commissioner is directed to cooperate with such federal agencies as may aid in securing prompt and suitable treatment, care and relief of any such member of the armed forces or his or her dependents. The records of the agencies of the state shall be placed at the disposal of the commissioner and such agencies are directed to cooperate with and to assist the commissioner in carrying out his or her duties. As used in this section, "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, as amended by this act.

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Sec. 14. Section 27-117 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

Any person who has in his or her possession or control any property of any person applying for or receiving aid from the Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund or the [department] Department of Veterans Affairs, or who is indebted to such applicant or recipient or has knowledge of any property belonging to him or her, and any officer who has control of the books and accounts of any corporation which has possession or control of any property belonging to any person applying for or receiving such aid or is indebted to him or her, shall, upon presentation by the disbursing officer thereof or any person deputized by him or her of a certificate signed by him or her, stating that such applicant or recipient has applied for or is receiving aid from said fund or the department, make full disclosure to such disbursing officer or deputy of any such property or indebtedness. Such disclosure may be obtained in like manner of the property or indebtedness of any person liable for the support of any such applicant or recipient.

Sec. 15. Subsection (c) of section 27-24 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(c) The Adjutant General shall designate either the assistant adjutant general for the Connecticut Army National Guard or the assistant adjutant general for the Connecticut Air National Guard to serve as administrative assistant and deputy to the Adjutant General and as deputy chief of staff to the Governor. Such assistant adjutant general (1) shall perform all of the duties of the Adjutant General in his absence, during his inability or by his direction and (2) shall devote all of his time, during the office hours of the [department] Military Department, to the duties of his office. The assistant adjutant general not so designated shall perform such duties, consistent with his grade and position, as the Adjutant General shall direct.

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Sec. 16. Section 27-25 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

The Adjutant General shall appoint a property and procurement officer who shall be the assistant of the Adjutant General in the care of all military property and who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Adjutant General. He shall devote all of his time, during the office hours of the [department] Military Department, to the duties of his office.

Sec. 17. Section 27-31 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

The Adjutant General shall appoint such number of employees, subject to the provisions of chapter 67 and section 4-40, as may be required to perform adequately the duties required of the [department] Military Department. Employees in the [Military Department] department, not in the classified service, shall serve [during] at the pleasure of the Adjutant General and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them.

Sec. 18. Section 27-102o of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

The Department of [Veterans'] Veterans Affairs may, subject to any limitations otherwise imposed by law, receive and accept on behalf of the state any funds that may be offered or that may become available from federal grants or appropriations, private gifts, donations or bequests, or any other source and may expend such funds for the purpose of financing, in whole or in part and on behalf of the state, the construction of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Sec. 19. Section 27-102p of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

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(a) Not later than July 15, 2007, and annually thereafter, each state agency or municipality that provides benefits to veterans, as defined in section 27-103, as amended by this act, shall submit a report to the Commissioner of [Veterans'] Veterans Affairs that includes a description of each type of benefit provided to veterans, the value of such benefit and the number of veterans to whom such benefit was provided, for the twelve-month period ending on June thirtieth of the same year. The commissioner shall compile the data in such report.

(b) Not later than August 1, 2007, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of [Veterans'] Veterans Affairs shall submit a report of the data compiled pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, for the twelve-month period ending on June thirtieth of the same year, to the Military Department and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a. Such report shall specify the total number of veterans receiving benefits and the value of such benefits by category of benefit and in total for such period.

Sec. 20. Subsection (c) of section 27-122a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(c) The land transferred to the commission under subsections (a) and (b) of this section and not transferred to the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Connecticut Valley Hospital shall be used by the Commissioner of [Veterans'] Veterans Affairs for the establishment and maintenance of a veterans' cemetery.

Sec. 21. Subsection (c) of section 51-49h of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(c) For the purposes of this section: (1) "Armed forces" means the

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United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force; (2) "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, as amended by this act; and (3) "military service" shall be service during World War II, December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946; the Korean hostilities, June 27, 1950, to October 27, 1953; and the Vietnam era, January 1, 1964, to July 1, 1975, and shall include service as a prisoner of war.

Sec. 22. Subsection (a) of section 27-20 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(a) The Adjutant General shall make such returns and reports to such officers as may be prescribed by the United States Department of Defense in regulations pertaining to the National Guard, at such times and in such form as prescribed. The Adjutant General shall (1) keep the service records of all officers and enlisted personnel, (2) issue authorized service medals, ribbons and documents, (3) (A) generate and maintain all records and documents required by state law or regulations thereunder, and (B) process requests for such records pursuant to the state Freedom of Information Act, as defined in section 1-200, and (4) (A) generate and maintain all records and documents required by federal law or regulations thereunder, and (B) process requests for such records pursuant to the federal Freedom of Information Act of 1976, 5 USC 552, as amended from time to time.

Sec. 23. Section 27-49 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

Officers of the National Guard and naval militia shall be appointed by the Governor, subject to the procedure prescribed in regulations of the United States Department of Defense relating to the National Guard and naval militia. The rule of seniority shall be followed when practicable. Only such officers shall be commissioned in the National

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Guard and naval militia as have successfully passed the tests and examinations as to physical, moral and professional fitness prescribed by the laws and regulations of the United States relating to the qualifications of National Guard or naval militia officers. Officers of the organized militia, as provided for in section 27-2, shall be appointed in accordance with regulations approved by the Governor.

Sec. 24. Subsection (d) of section 1-219 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(d) The provisions of this section concerning the maintenance and recording of United States Department of Defense documents shall not apply to the State Library Board or the State Librarian.

Sec. 25. Subsection (a) of section 8-106 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(a) "Persons engaged in national defense activities" includes persons in the military service of the United States; employees of the United States Department of Defense; and workers engaged or to be engaged in activities connected with and essential to national defense; and includes the families of the aforesaid persons who are living with them.

Sec. 26. Subsection (b) of section 14-36h of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(b) If any person does not reside in any state, territory or possession of the United States because such person is on active military duty with the United States Armed Forces, and such person's home state of record is Connecticut, as reflected in the records of the United States Department of Defense, United States Department of Homeland Security or any federal department under which the United States Coast

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Guard operates, such person may obtain a Connecticut operator's license or identity card, provided such person: (1) Does not have an operator's license or identity card issued by another state, territory or possession of the United States, or surrenders any such license or identity card; (2) has a current APO or FPO mailing address; (3) designates such person's home address as 60 State Street, Wethersfield, CT 06161; and (4) meets all other requirements for obtaining an operator's license or identity card in this state.

Sec. 27. Section 17a-453d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Veterans Affairs, shall provide behavioral health services, on a transitional basis, for the dependents and any member of any reserve component of the armed forces of the United States who has been called to active service in the armed forces of the state or the United States for Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom. Such transitional services shall be provided when no United States Department of Defense coverage for such services is available or such member is not eligible for such services through the United States Department of Defense, until an approved application is received from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and coverage is available to such member and such member's dependents.

Sec. 28. Subsection (b) of section 20-327f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(b) With respect to a contract for the sale of a one-to-four family residential real property, if the seller provides written notice to the purchaser, prior to, or upon, entering into the contract, of the availability of information concerning environmental matters from the [federal]

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United States Environmental Protection Agency, the National Response Center, the United States Department of Defense and third-party providers, the seller and any real estate licensee shall be deemed to have fully satisfied any duty to disclose environmental matters concerning properties other than the property that is the subject of the contract.

Sec. 29. Subsection (b) of section 22a-337 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

(b) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection is designated as the shore erosion agency of the state for the purpose of cooperating with the Beach Erosion Board of the United States Department of Defense, as provided for in Section 2 of the "River and Harbor Act" adopted by Congress and approved July 3, 1930, and known as H.R. Number 11781 of the second session of the 71st Congress. Said commissioner shall carry out investigations and studies of conditions along the shore line, harbors, rivers and islands within the territorial waters of the state in order to promote and encourage the healthful recreation of its citizens and with a view to devising and projecting economical and effective methods and works for preventing and correcting shore erosion and damage to public and private property therefrom and to prevent inundation of improved property by storms, erosion and ravages of the sea.

Sec. 30. Section 5-224 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

Any veteran who served in time of war, if such veteran is not eligible for disability compensation or pension from the [United States] United States Department of Veterans Affairs, or the spouse of such veteran who by reason of such veteran's disability is unable to pursue gainful employment, or the unmarried surviving spouse of such veteran, and if such person has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any

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examination held for an original appointment for the purpose of establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with subsection (d) of section 5-228, shall have five points added to his or her earned rating. Any such veteran, or the spouse of such veteran who by reason of such veteran's disability is unable to pursue gainful employment, or the unmarried surviving spouse of such veteran, if such person is eligible for such disability compensation or pension and if such person has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any such examination held for an original appointment for the purpose of establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with subsection (d) of section 5-228, shall have ten points added to his or her earned rating. Any veteran who has served in a military action for which such person received or was entitled to receive a campaign badge or expeditionary medal, shall have five points added to his or her earned rating if such person has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any such examination held for an original appointment for the purpose of establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with subsection (d) of section 5-228 and such person is not otherwise eligible to receive additional points pursuant to this section. Any person who is a member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, as amended by this act, and who is in the final year of an enlistment contract with any branch of the armed forces shall have five points added to his or her earned rating if such person has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any such examination held for an original appointment for the purpose of establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with subsection (d) of section 5-228. Names of any such persons shall be placed upon the candidate lists in the order of such augmented ratings. Credits shall be based upon examinations with a possible rating of one hundred points.

Sec. 31. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to (1) evaluate state property tax exemptions, abatements and other relief granted to veterans, (2) make recommendations concerning whether

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any such state veterans property tax relief should be adjusted to more effectively align with the intent, at the time of enactment, for such relief, and (3) create a list of municipalities in the state that have enacted local veterans property tax relief and specify the nature of such relief in each such municipality.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

(2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

(3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives;

(4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

(c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

(d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

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(f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to military and veterans' affairs shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

(g) Not later than January 1, 2023, the task force shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to military and veterans' affairs and planning and development, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

Sec. 32. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than September 1, 2022, the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to veterans' affairs, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, recommendations for improvements regarding municipal veterans' representatives, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-135 of the general statutes, to ensure consistent, effective and efficient provision of services to veterans, as defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, throughout the state.

Sec. 33. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2022*) (a) Any municipality, by vote of its legislative body or, in a municipality where the legislative body is a town meeting, by vote of the board of selectmen, may provide that any veteran, as defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, whose federal adjusted gross income is fifty thousand one hundred dollars or less shall be entitled to an exemption from the tax imposed under chapter 203 of the general statutes on any dwelling owned and occupied by such veteran as such veteran's primary residence, in an amount equal to ten per cent of the assessed value of such primary residence.

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(b) (1) Any veteran who claims an exemption under subsection (a) of this section shall give notice to the town clerk of the municipality in which such primary residence is located that such veteran is entitled to such exemption.

(2) Any veteran submitting a claim for such exemption shall file an application, on a form prepared by the assessor of the municipality in which such primary residence is located, not later than the assessment date with respect to which such exemption is claimed, which application shall include (A) (i) a certified copy of such veteran's military discharge document, as defined in section 1-219 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or (ii) in the absence of such certified copy, at least two affidavits of disinterested individuals showing that the claimant is a veteran, provided the assessor may further require such claimant to be examined by such assessor under oath concerning the facts contained in such affidavits, and (B) a copy of such veteran's federal income tax return or, in the event such a return is not filed, such evidence as may be required by the assessor, for the tax year of such veteran ending immediately prior to the assessment date with respect to which such exemption is claimed. The town clerk of the municipality in which such primary residence is located shall record the certified copy or affidavits submitted pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this subdivision in full and shall list the name of such veteran, and such service shall be performed by such town clerk without remuneration. No assessor, board of assessment appeals or other official shall allow any such claim for exemption unless the certified copy or affidavits specified in this subsection have been filed with the office of the town clerk. Any veteran who has submitted a claim for such exemption and received approval for the first time shall file for such exemption biennially thereafter, subject to the provisions of subdivision (3) of this subsection.

(3) The assessor of such municipality shall annually make a certified

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list of all such veterans who are found to be entitled to an exemption under the provisions of this section, which list shall be filed in the town clerk's office and shall be prima facie evidence that any veteran whose name appears on such list is entitled to such exemption, subject to the provisions of subsection (c) of this section, as long as such veteran continues to own and occupy the dwelling as such veteran's primary residence. Such assessor may, at any time, require such veteran to appear before such assessor for the purpose of furnishing additional evidence, except that any veteran who, by reason of total disability, is unable to so appear may furnish such assessor (A) a statement from such veteran's attending physician or advanced practice registered nurse, certifying that such veteran is totally disabled and unable to make a personal appearance, and (B) such other evidence of total disability as such assessor may deem appropriate.

(4) No veteran may receive an exemption under this section until such veteran has proven such veteran's right to such exemption in accordance with the provisions of this section, together with such further proof as may be required under such provisions. Exemptions so proven shall take effect on the next succeeding assessment day.

(c) Any veteran who has submitted an application and been approved in any year for the exemption provided in subsection (a) of this section shall, in the assessment year immediately following approval, be presumed to qualify for such exemption. During the year immediately following such approval, the assessor shall notify, in writing, such veteran presumed to be qualified pursuant to this subsection. If any such veteran has qualifying income in excess of the maximum allowed under subsection (a) of this section, such veteran shall notify the assessor on or before the next filing date of such exemption and shall be denied such exemption for the assessment year immediately following and for any subsequent year until such veteran has reapplied and again qualified for such exemption. Any such veteran

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who fails to notify the assessor of such disqualification shall make payment to the municipality in the amount of property tax loss related to such exemption improperly taken.

Sec. 34. Section 12-2b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall:

(1) In consultation with the Commissioner of Agriculture, develop schedules of unit prices for property classified under sections 12-107a to 12-107e, inclusive, update such schedules by October 1, 1990, and every five years thereafter, and make such data, studies and schedules available to municipalities and the public;

(2) [develop] Develop regulations setting forth standards and tests for: Certifying revaluation companies and their employees, which regulations shall ensure that a revaluation company is competent in appraising and valuing property, certifying revaluation companies and their employees, requiring that a certified employee supervise all valuations performed by a revaluation company for municipalities, maintaining lists of certified revaluation companies and upon request, advising municipalities in drafting contracts with revaluation companies, and conducting investigations and withdrawing the certification of any revaluation company or employee found not to be conforming to such regulations. The regulations shall provide for the imposition of a fee payable to a testing service designated by the secretary to administer certification examinations; [and]

(3) [by] By himself, or by an agent whom he may appoint, inquire if all property taxes [which] that are due and collectible by each town or city not consolidated with a town, are in fact collected and paid to the treasurer thereof in the manner prescribed by law, and if accounts and records of the tax collectors and treasurers of such entities are adequate

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and properly kept. The secretary may hold meetings, conferences or schools for assessors, tax collectors or municipal finance officers; and

(4) Provide jointly with the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs a written notice annually to municipalities and veterans' organizations of the property tax exemptions that a municipality may opt to approve under chapter 203 for veterans, veterans' relatives or spouses or persons killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed forces.

Approved May 17, 2022