



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 1131

January Session, 2023



**AN ACT CONCERNING VETERANS' SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES
AND DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR CERTAIN FORMER ARMED FORCES
RESERVISTS.**

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 Section 14-20b of the general statutes is repealed and the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, 2023*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at the request of any
4 veteran or member of the armed forces or the surviving spouse of such
5 veteran or member, shall register any motor vehicle owned or leased
6 for a period of at least one year by such person and shall issue a special
7 certificate of registration and a set of number plates for each such
8 motor vehicle, including a special certificate of registration and a set of
9 number plates for any motor vehicle used exclusively for farming
10 purposes by any such veteran or member of the armed forces, or the
11 surviving spouse of such veteran or member, who is engaged in
12 agricultural production as a trade or business. The plates shall expire
13 and be renewed as provided in section 14-22. The commissioner shall
14 charge a fee for such plates, which fee shall cover the entire cost of
15 making such plates and shall be in addition to the fee for registration
16 of such motor vehicle. The commissioner shall charge a fee of fifteen
17 dollars to replace such plates that become mutilated or illegible. [As
18 used in this subsection, "veteran" and "armed forces" have the same

19 meanings as provided in section 27-103.] Any such member of the
20 armed forces who is dishonorably discharged shall return such plates
21 to the commissioner not later than thirty days after such discharge. The
22 commissioner shall not renew such plates for any motor vehicle owned
23 or leased by any such member of the armed forces who is
24 dishonorably discharged.

25 (b) (1) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at the request of any
26 person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla
27 units, which units served in the United States secret war in the
28 Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War, or any person who is an
29 eligible former reservist, or the surviving spouse of any such person,
30 and after verification from the Department of Veterans Affairs as
31 provided under subdivision (2) or (3) of this subsection, as applicable,
32 shall register any motor vehicle owned or leased for a period of at least
33 one year by such person and shall issue a special certificate of
34 registration and a set of number plates for each such motor vehicle,
35 including a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates
36 for any motor vehicle used exclusively for farming purposes by any
37 such person, or the surviving spouse of such person, who is engaged
38 in agricultural production as a trade or business. The plates shall
39 expire and be renewed as provided in section 14-22. The commissioner
40 shall charge a fee for such plates, which fee shall cover the entire cost
41 of making such plates and shall be in addition to the fee for
42 registration of such motor vehicle.

43 (2) Any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special
44 guerilla units, or the surviving spouse of such person, may submit a
45 request to the Department of Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran,
46 based on such person's service during the Vietnam War, for the
47 purpose of obtaining a special certificate of registration and a set of
48 number plates under subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such person, or
49 the surviving spouse of such person, shall provide to said department
50 (A) an affidavit stating (i) when such person served, (ii) where such
51 person served, (iii) the unit in which such person served, and (iv) the

52 capacity in which such person served; (B) any available corroborating
53 witness affidavits; (C) any available official documentation of service;
54 and (D) any other documents supporting such person's or such
55 surviving spouse's affidavit. Said department shall, not later than
56 thirty days after receipt of such request, verify whether such person
57 was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units and, if so
58 verified, notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request
59 and verification.

60 (3) (A) Any person who is an eligible former reservist, or the
61 surviving spouse of such person, may submit a request to the
62 Department of Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran, based on such
63 person's service in a reserve component of the armed forces, for the
64 purpose of obtaining a special certificate of registration and a set of
65 number plates under subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such person, or
66 the surviving spouse of such person, shall provide to said department
67 all available official documentation of such service. Said department
68 shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such request, verify
69 such person's service and, if so verified, notify the Commissioner of
70 Motor Vehicles of such request and verification.

71 (B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this
72 subsection or subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, neither the
73 issuance of such registration and number plates to a person by the
74 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles nor the listing of such person as a
75 veteran by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall constitute proof
76 of such person's eligibility for any other benefit available to veterans.

77 (c) [Any such member of the armed forces who is dishonorably
78 discharged shall return such plates to the commissioner not later than
79 thirty days after such discharge. The commissioner shall not renew
80 such plates for any motor vehicle owned or leased by any such
81 member of the armed forces who is dishonorably discharged.] As used
82 in this section, "eligible former reservist" means any person honorably
83 discharged from, released under honorable conditions from or released
84 with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying

85 condition from, the United States Army Reserve, Army National
86 Guard, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve,
87 Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard; and "veteran", "armed
88 forces" and "qualifying condition" have the same meanings as
89 provided in section 27-103.

90 Sec. 2. Section 14-36h of the general statutes is repealed and the
91 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

92 (a) Each motor vehicle operator's license issued by the
93 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles in accordance with section 14-36 and
94 each identity card issued by said commissioner in accordance with
95 section 1-1h shall contain the following: (1) The person's full legal
96 name; (2) the person's date of birth; (3) the person's gender; (4) the
97 person's height and eye color; (5) the person's assigned operator's
98 license or identity card number; (6) the person's address of principal
99 residence in this state; (7) the person's signature; (8) the person's
100 photograph or digital image; and (9) if applicable, the person's status
101 as a veteran, as provided in subsections (e) and (f) of this section.

102 (b) If any person does not reside in any state, territory or possession
103 of the United States because such person is on active military duty
104 with the United States Armed Forces, and such person's home state of
105 record is Connecticut, as reflected in the records of the United States
106 Department of Defense, United States Department of Homeland
107 Security or any federal department under which the United States
108 Coast Guard operates, such person may obtain a Connecticut
109 operator's license or identity card, provided such person: (1) Does not
110 have an operator's license or identity card issued by another state,
111 territory or possession of the United States, or surrenders any such
112 license or identity card; (2) has a current APO or FPO mailing address;
113 (3) designates such person's home address as 60 State Street,
114 Wethersfield, CT 06161; and (4) meets all other requirements for
115 obtaining an operator's license or identity card in this state.

116 (c) The commissioner shall provide that each such license or identity

117 card document contains physical security features designed to prevent
118 tampering, counterfeiting or duplication of the document.

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

122 (e) Any person who is a veteran may submit a request to the
123 Department of Veterans Affairs to have [his or her] such person's
124 status as a veteran contained on [his or her] such person's motor
125 vehicle operator's license or identity card. Said department shall, not
126 later than thirty days after receipt of such request, verify whether such
127 person is a veteran and, if so verified, notify the Commissioner of
128 Motor Vehicles of such request and verification. The Commissioner of
129 Motor Vehicles shall indicate such person's status as a veteran on any
130 motor vehicle operator's license or identity card issued to such person
131 upon original issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle operator's license
132 or identity card or upon issuance of a duplicate motor vehicle
133 operator's license or identity card.

134 (f) (1) Any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special
135 guerilla units, which units served in the United States secret war in the
136 Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War, or any person who is an
137 eligible former reservist, may submit a request to the Department of
138 Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran, based on such person's
139 service during the Vietnam War or in a reserve component of the
140 armed forces, respectively, on [his or her] such person's motor vehicle
141 operator's license or identity card. Said department shall, not later than
142 thirty days after receipt of such request and the documents required
143 under subdivision (2) or (3), as applicable, of this subsection, verify
144 whether such person was such a member or is such an eligible former
145 reservist, as applicable, and, if so verified, notify the Commissioner of
146 Motor Vehicles of such request and verification. The Commissioner of
147 Motor Vehicles shall indicate such person's status as a veteran on any
148 motor vehicle operator's license or identity card issued to such person
149 upon original issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle operator's license

150 or identity card or upon issuance of a duplicate motor vehicle
151 operator's license or identity card.

152 (2) Any such person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian
153 special guerilla units shall submit to the Department of Veterans
154 Affairs, in addition to the request under subdivision (1) of this
155 subsection, (A) an affidavit stating (i) when such person served, (ii)
156 where such person served, (iii) the unit in which such person served,
157 and (iv) the capacity in which such person served; (B) any available
158 corroborating witness affidavits; (C) any available official
159 documentation of service; and (D) any other documents supporting
160 such person's affidavit.

161 (3) (A) Any such person who is an eligible former reservist shall
162 submit to the Department of Veterans Affairs, in addition to the
163 request under subdivision (1) of this subsection, all available official
164 documentation of such person's service in a reserve component of the
165 armed forces and discharge or release therefrom.

166 (B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this
167 subsection, neither the listing of a person as a veteran by the
168 Commissioner of Veterans Affairs nor the indication of such person's
169 status as a veteran on any motor vehicle operator's license or identity
170 card by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall constitute proof of
171 such person's eligibility for any other benefit available to veterans.

172 (g) As used in this section: (1) "Full legal name" means the most
173 complete version of the name that appears on a person's certificate of
174 birth, official passport or other document or documents accepted by
175 the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to verify the person's identity,
176 unless the person presents a marriage license or certificate, a certificate
177 of civil union, a divorce decree or an order of a court of competent
178 jurisdiction pertaining to a permanent change of the person's name;
179 [and] (2) "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103,
180 or any former member of the armed forces who is entitled to
181 retirement pay under 10 USC Chapter 1223, as amended from time to

182 time, or, but for age, would be so entitled; (3) "eligible former reservist"
183 means any person honorably discharged from, released under
184 honorable conditions from or released with an other than honorable
185 discharge based on a qualifying condition from, the United States
186 Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps
187 Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Air Force Reserve or Air National
188 Guard; and (4) "armed forces" and "qualifying condition" have the
189 same meanings as provided in section 27-103.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2023	14-20b
Sec. 2	October 1, 2023	14-36h

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 2(f)(1), the first occurrence of "as applicable" was changed to "respectively", for clarity.

VA *Joint Favorable Subst.*