



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 36

January Session, 2025

Senate Bill No. 376

Senate, March 5, 2025

The Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs reported through SEN. HONIG of the 8th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

**AN ACT ELIMINATING SERVICE IN TIME OF WAR AS AN
ELIGIBILITY CRITERION FOR CERTAIN STATE AND MUNICIPAL
VETERANS' BENEFITS.**

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 10a-77 of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
3 *2025*):

4 (d) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition at any of
5 the regional community-technical colleges (1) for any dependent child
6 of a person whom the armed forces of the United States has declared to
7 be missing in action or to have been a prisoner of war while serving in
8 such armed forces after January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted
9 for admission to such institution and is a resident of the state at the time
10 such child is accepted for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the
11 provisions of subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in
12 section 27-103, who [performed service in time of war, as defined in
13 section 27-103, except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in

14 time of war" shall not include time spent in attendance at a military
15 service academy, which veteran] has been accepted for admission to
16 such institution and is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is
17 accepted for admission to such institution, (3) for any resident of the
18 state sixty-two years of age or older, provided, at the end of the regular
19 registration period, there are enrolled in the course a sufficient number
20 of students other than those residents eligible for waivers pursuant to
21 this subdivision to offer the course in which such resident intends to
22 enroll and there is space available in such course after accommodating
23 all such students, (4) for any student attending the Connecticut State
24 Police Academy who is enrolled in a law enforcement program at said
25 academy offered in coordination with a regional community-technical
26 college which accredits courses taken in such program, (5) for any active
27 member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A) has
28 been certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's
29 designee as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled
30 or accepted for admission to such institution on a full-time or part-time
31 basis in an undergraduate degree-granting program, (6) for any
32 dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, or
33 supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined in
34 section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal
35 employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in
36 the line of duty, (7) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child
37 or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a resident of
38 this state, (8) for any dependent child of a resident of the state who was
39 killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of Routes 44 and
40 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, and (9) for any resident of
41 the state who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a person who
42 was killed in action while performing active military duty with the
43 armed forces of the United States on or after September 11, 2001, and
44 who was a resident of this state. If any person who receives a tuition
45 waiver in accordance with the provisions of this subsection also receives
46 educational reimbursement from an employer, such waiver shall be
47 reduced by the amount of such educational reimbursement. Veterans
48 and members of the National Guard described in subdivision (5) of this

49 subsection shall be given the same status as students not receiving
50 tuition waivers in registering for courses at regional community-
51 technical colleges. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 10a-30, as
52 used in this subsection, "domiciled in this state" includes domicile for
53 less than one year.

54 Sec. 2. Subsection (d) of section 10a-99 of the general statutes is
55 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
56 *2025*):

57 (d) Said board shall waive the payment of tuition fees for
58 undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the Connecticut State
59 University System (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the
60 armed forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or
61 to have been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after
62 January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to such
63 institution and is a resident of the state at the time such child is accepted
64 for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the provisions of
65 subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-
66 103, who [performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,
67 except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall
68 not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy,
69 which veteran] has been accepted for admission to such institution and
70 is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for
71 admission to such institution, (3) for any resident of the state sixty-two
72 years of age or older who has been accepted for admission to such
73 institution, provided (A) such resident is enrolled in a degree-granting
74 program, or (B) at the end of the regular registration period, there are
75 enrolled in the course a sufficient number of students other than those
76 residents eligible for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to offer the
77 course in which such resident intends to enroll and there is space
78 available in such course after accommodating all such students, (4) for
79 any student attending the Connecticut Police Academy who is enrolled
80 in a law enforcement program at said academy offered in coordination
81 with the university which accredits courses taken in such program, (5)
82 for any active member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard

83 who (A) has been certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant
84 General's designee as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B)
85 is enrolled or accepted for admission to such institution on a full-time
86 or part-time basis in an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting
87 program, (6) for any dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined
88 in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B)
89 firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire
90 company, (C) municipal employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in
91 section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (7) for any resident of this state
92 who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist
93 victim who was a resident of the state, (8) for any dependent child of a
94 resident of the state who was killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the
95 intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005,
96 and (9) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or
97 surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action while performing
98 active military duty with the armed forces of the United States on or
99 after September 11, 2001, and who was a resident of this state. If any
100 person who receives a tuition waiver in accordance with the provisions
101 of this subsection also receives educational reimbursement from an
102 employer, such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such
103 educational reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National
104 Guard described in subdivision (5) of this subsection shall be given the
105 same status as students not receiving tuition waivers in registering for
106 courses at Connecticut state universities. Notwithstanding the
107 provisions of section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in
108 this state" includes domicile for less than one year.

109 Sec. 3. Subsection (e) of section 10a-105 of the general statutes is
110 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
111 *2025*):

112 (e) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition fees for
113 any undergraduate or graduate degree program at The University of
114 Connecticut (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the armed
115 forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or to have
116 been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after January

1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to The University of Connecticut and is a resident of the state at the time such child is accepted for admission to said institution, (2) subject to the provisions of subsection (f) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-103, who [performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103, except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy, which veteran] has been accepted for admission to said institution and is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for admission to said institution, (3) for any resident of the state sixty-two years of age or older who has been accepted for admission to said institution, provided (A) such resident is enrolled in a degree-granting program, or (B) at the end of the regular registration period, there are enrolled in the course a sufficient number of students other than those residents eligible for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to offer the course in which such resident intends to enroll and there is space available in such course after accommodating all such students, (4) for any active member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A) has been certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's designee as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled or accepted for admission to said institution on a full-time or part-time basis in an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting program, (5) for any dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (6) for any resident of the state who is the dependent child or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a resident of the state, (7) for any dependent child of a resident of the state who was killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, and (8) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed forces of the United States on or after September 11, 2001, and who was a resident of this state. If any

152 person who receives a tuition waiver in accordance with the provisions
153 of this subsection also receives educational reimbursement from an
154 employer, such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such
155 educational reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National
156 Guard described in subdivision (4) of this subsection shall be given the
157 same status as students not receiving tuition waivers in registering for
158 courses at The University of Connecticut. Notwithstanding the
159 provisions of section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in
160 this state" includes domicile for less than one year.

161 Sec. 4. Section 5-224 of the general statutes is repealed and the
162 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

163 Any veteran, [who served in time of war,] if such veteran is not
164 eligible for disability compensation or pension from the United States
165 Department of Veterans Affairs, or the spouse of such veteran who by
166 reason of such veteran's disability is unable to pursue gainful
167 employment, or the unmarried surviving spouse of such veteran, and if
168 such person has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any
169 examination held for an original appointment for the purpose of
170 establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with
171 subsection (d) of section 5-228, shall have five points added to [his or
172 her] such person's earned rating. Any such veteran, or the spouse of
173 such veteran who by reason of such veteran's disability is unable to
174 pursue gainful employment, or the unmarried surviving spouse of such
175 veteran, if such person is eligible for such disability compensation or
176 pension and if such person has attained at least the minimum earned
177 rating on any such examination held for an original appointment for the
178 purpose of establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance
179 with subsection (d) of section 5-228, shall have ten points added to [his
180 or her] such person's earned rating. Any veteran who has served in a
181 military action for which such [person] veteran received or was entitled
182 to receive a campaign badge or expeditionary medal, shall have five
183 points added to [his or her] such veteran's earned rating if such [person]
184 veteran has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any such
185 examination held for an original appointment for the purpose of

186 establishing a candidate list to fill a vacancy in accordance with
187 subsection (d) of section 5-228 and such [person] veteran is not
188 otherwise eligible to receive additional points pursuant to this section.
189 Any person who is a member of the armed forces, as defined in section
190 27-103, and who is in the final year of an enlistment contract with any
191 branch of the armed forces shall have five points added to [his or her]
192 such person's earned rating if such person has attained at least the
193 minimum earned rating on any such examination held for an original
194 appointment for the purpose of establishing a candidate list to fill a
195 vacancy in accordance with subsection (d) of section 5-228. Names of
196 any such persons shall be placed upon the candidate lists in the order of
197 such augmented ratings. Credits shall be based upon examinations with
198 a possible rating of one hundred points.

199 Sec. 5. Section 7-415 of the general statutes is repealed and the
200 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

201 Any veteran, [who served in time of war, if he] if such veteran is not
202 eligible for disability compensation or pension from the United States
203 through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and if [he]
204 such veteran has attained at least the minimum earned rating on any
205 examination held for the purpose of establishing an employment list for
206 original appointment, shall have five points added to [his] such
207 veteran's earned rating. Any such veteran, if [he] such veteran is eligible
208 for such disability compensation or pension and if [he] such veteran has
209 attained at least the minimum earned rating on any such examination,
210 shall have ten points added to [his] such veteran's earned rating. Names
211 of veterans shall be placed on the list of eligibles in the order of such
212 augmented rating. Credits shall be based upon examinations with a
213 possible rating of one hundred points. No such points shall be added to
214 any earned rating in any civil service or merit examination except as
215 provided in this section, the provisions of any municipal charter or
216 special act notwithstanding.

217 Sec. 6. Section 27-125 of the general statutes is repealed and the
218 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

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

238 Sec. 7. Section 27-140 of the general statutes is repealed and the
239 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

240 All money so paid to and received by the American Legion shall be
241 expended by it in furnishing temporary income; subsistence items such
242 as food, wearing apparel, shelter and related expenses; medical or
243 surgical aid or care or relief (1) to, or in bearing the funeral expenses of,
244 soldiers, sailors or marines (A) (i) who [performed service in time of
245 war, as defined in section 27-103,] served in any branch of the military
246 service of the United States, including the Connecticut National Guard,
247 or (ii) who were engaged in any of the wars waged by the United States
248 during said periods in the forces of any government associated with the
249 United States, (B) who are or were veterans, as defined in section 27-103,
250 and (C) who were citizens or resident aliens of the state at the time of
251 entering said armed forces of the United States, including the
252 Connecticut National Guard, or of any such government, (2) to their

253 spouses who are living with them, (3) to their widows or widowers who
254 were living with them at the time of death, or (4) to dependent children
255 under eighteen years of age, who may be in need of [the same] such
256 temporary income, subsistence items, medical or surgical aid or care or
257 relief. All such payments shall be made by the American Legion under
258 authority of its bylaws, which bylaws shall set forth the procedure for
259 proof of eligibility for such aid, provided payments made for the care
260 and treatment of any person entitled to the benefits provided for
261 [herein] in this section, at any hospital receiving aid from the General
262 Assembly unless special care and treatment are required, shall be in
263 accordance with the provisions of section 17b-239, and provided the
264 sum expended for the care or treatment of such person at any other place
265 than a state-aided hospital shall in no case exceed the actual cost of
266 supporting such person at the Healthcare Center in Rocky Hill
267 maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs, unless special care
268 and treatment are required, when such sum as may be determined by
269 the treasurer of such organization may be paid [therefor] for such care
270 and treatment. Upon the completion of the trust provided for in section
271 27-138, the principal fund shall revert to the State Treasury.

272 Sec. 8. Section 14-254 of the general statutes is repealed and the
273 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

274 "Disabled veteran", as used in this section, means a person who (1)
275 [any] is a veteran, as defined in section 27-103, [who performed service
276 in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,] and (2) (A) has one or both
277 [of whose] legs or arms or parts thereof [have been] amputated or the
278 use of which has been lost, (B) [who] is blind, paraplegic or hemiplegic,
279 or (C) [who] has traumatic brain injury, provided any such disability
280 described in subdivision (2) of this section [being] is certified as service-
281 connected by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The
282 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, upon application of any disabled
283 veteran accompanied by such certificate of United States Department of
284 Veterans Affairs, shall issue without charge a special number plate or
285 set of plates in accordance with the provisions of subsection (a) of
286 section 14-21b to be attached to a passenger motor vehicle owned or

287 operated by such disabled veteran and an identification card to be used
288 in connection therewith. The card shall identify the disabled veteran and
289 the motor vehicle and shall state that such disabled veteran is qualified
290 to receive the card, that the card, plate or plates shall be returned to the
291 commissioner if the registration of the motor vehicle is cancelled or
292 transferred and that the card is for the exclusive use of the disabled
293 veteran to whom it is issued, is not transferable and will be revoked if
294 presented by any other person or if any privilege granted under this
295 section is abused. If not so revoked, the card shall be renewable every
296 four years at the time of registration of motor vehicles. No penalty shall
297 be imposed for the overtime parking of any motor vehicle bearing a
298 number plate issued under this section when it has been so parked by
299 the disabled veteran to whom the plate and an identification card were
300 issued or by any person operating such vehicle when accompanied by
301 such disabled veteran, provided the length of time for which such
302 vehicle may remain parked at any one location shall not exceed twenty-
303 four hours. The surviving spouse of a disabled veteran issued such
304 special registration may retain any such registration and number plates
305 without charge for [his or her] such surviving spouse's lifetime or until
306 such time as [he or she] such surviving spouse remarries.

307 Sec. 9. Subdivision (19) of section 12-81 of the general statutes is
308 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
309 *1, 2025, and applicable to assessment years commencing on or after October 1,*
310 *2025*):

311 (19) Subject to the provisions of sections 12-89, 12-90 and 12-95,
312 property to the amount of one thousand dollars belonging to, or held in
313 trust for, (A) any resident of this state who is a veteran, as defined in
314 section 27-103, [who was a member of the armed forces in service in time
315 of war,] (B) any resident of this state who was a citizen of the United
316 States at the time of [his] such resident's enlistment and who was in the
317 military or naval service of a government allied or associated with that
318 of the United States during the Second World War and received an
319 honorable discharge therefrom, (C) any resident of this state who served
320 during the Second World War as a member of any armed force of any

321 government signatory to the United Nations Declaration of January 1,
322 1942, and participated in armed conflict with an enemy of the United
323 States and who has been a citizen of the United States for at least ten
324 years and presents satisfactory evidence of such service, (D) any
325 resident of this state who served as a member of the crew of a merchant
326 vessel during the Second World War and is qualified with respect to
327 such service as a member of the group known as the "American
328 Merchant Marine in ocean-going service during the period of armed
329 conflict, December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945", members of which are
330 deemed to be eligible for certain veterans benefits under a
331 determination in the United States Department of Defense, as recorded
332 in the Federal Register of February 1, 1988, provided such resident has
333 received an armed forces discharge certificate from the Department of
334 Defense on the basis of such service, (E) any member of the armed forces
335 who was in service in time of war and is still in the service and by reason
336 of continuous service has not as yet received a discharge, (F) any person
337 who is retired from the armed forces after thirty years of service because
338 [he] such person has reached the age limit prescribed by law or because
339 [he] such person suffers from mental or physical disability, or (G) any
340 person who is serving in the armed services in time of war; or lacking
341 said amount of property in [his] such person's own name, so much of
342 the property belonging to, or held in trust for, [his] such person's spouse,
343 who is domiciled with [him] such person, as is necessary to equal said
344 amount. For the purposes of this subdivision, "veteran", "armed forces"
345 and "service in time of war" have the same meanings as provided in
346 section 27-103;

347 Sec. 10. Section 27-76 of the general statutes is repealed and the
348 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

349 When requested by the commander of any accredited veteran
350 organization or by friends or relatives of any deceased person who has
351 served in any of the armed forces of the United States, [during time of
352 war, as defined in section 27-103, or] who has served in the National
353 Guard for more than twenty years or who has died while a member of
354 the National Guard, the Adjutant General shall order an honor guard

355 detail from the National Guard, the naval militia, the State Guard or the
356 organized militia to attend the funeral, except that if an honor guard
357 detail from such guard or militia is unavailable or committed elsewhere,
358 the Adjutant General shall request an honor guard detail from a bona
359 fide Connecticut state veterans' organization, provided such detail shall
360 comply with the rules and procedures set forth in Connecticut National
361 Guard regulation 37-106. Such detail shall consist of not more than five
362 members plus one bugler. The members thereof shall be compensated
363 at the rate of sixty dollars per day. Such compensation shall be paid from
364 funds appropriated to the Adjutant General for the pay of the National
365 Guard and from federal funds received for that purpose.

366 Sec. 11. Subsection (a) of section 21-37 of the general statutes is
367 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
368 *1, 2025*):

369 (a) Any town may make reasonable ordinances with reference to the
370 vending or hawking upon its public streets or upon any state highway,
371 except limited access highways, within such town or any land abutting
372 such streets or highways of any goods, wares or other merchandise at
373 public or private sale or auction, or to the vending or peddling of such
374 articles from house to house within its limits, including the imposition
375 of a fee, not exceeding two hundred dollars a year, applicable with
376 respect to any person engaged in such vending, hawking or peddling,
377 for the privilege of so vending, hawking or peddling such merchandise.
378 Any ordinance adopted pursuant to this section which requires a permit
379 may require that no such permit shall be issued to any person who has
380 not obtained a permit to engage in or transact business as a seller within
381 the state in accordance with section 12-409 and shall require that any
382 permit issued pursuant to such ordinance shall be conspicuously
383 displayed at the place the activities are undertaken. Such ordinances
384 may provide that the authority issuing such permit may waive the
385 permit fee for a nonprofit organization exempt from federal taxation by
386 Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent
387 corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as from time
388 to time amended, or a charitable organization. No town shall require a

389 permit fee from any resident of this state who has resided within the
 390 state for a period of two years next preceding the date of application for
 391 such permit, who is (1) a veteran, [who served in time of war,] as defined
 392 in section 27-103, (2) a hawker or peddler, and (3) a principal pursuant
 393 to section 21-36.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-77(d)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-99(d)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-105(e)
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	5-224
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	7-415
Sec. 6	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	27-125
Sec. 7	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	27-140
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-254
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2025, and applicable to assessment years commencing on or after October 1, 2025</i>	12-81(19)
Sec. 10	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	27-76
Sec. 11	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	21-37(a)

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 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Soldiers, Sailors & Marines' Fund	SF - Cost	540,000	540,000
Military Dept.	GF - Cost	120,000	160,000
Motor Vehicle Dept.	TF - Potential Revenue Loss	Minimal	Minimal
Constituent Units of Higher Education	OF - Potential Revenue Loss	Minimal	Minimal

Note: SF=Special Fund (Non-appropriated); GF=General Fund; TF=Transportation Fund; OF= Other Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
All Municipalities	Revenue Loss	None	See Below
Various Municipalities	Potential Revenue Loss	Minimal	Minimal

Explanation

The bill expands certain benefits, currently available to veterans who served in a time of war, to veterans who served during peacetime, resulting in numerous fiscal impacts. The bill results, annually beginning in FY 26, in a cost to the Military Department, and the Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines Fund, and a potential, minimal revenue loss to the Department of Motor Vehicles and to the constituent units of higher education. It also results in a revenue loss to all municipalities annually beginning in FY 27 and a potential revenue loss to various municipalities annually beginning in FY 26.

Sections 1 – 3 result in a potential, minimal revenue loss to the constituent units of higher education annually beginning in FY 26. The

bill expands, to veterans who did not serve during a time of war, a tuition waiver currently available only to veterans who did serve during a time of war.

It is not known how many peacetime veterans are currently attending the constituent units, but the number is expected to be minimal. According to the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), eras of peacetime include periods between: (1) WWII and the Korean War; (2) the Korean War and the Vietnam War; (3) the Vietnam War and the Gulf War; and (4) after the end of the war in Afghanistan. The VA indicates that there are currently no veterans who served entirely since the end of the war in Afghanistan.

If ten veterans at each constituent unit receive a tuition waiver as a result of the bill, the total revenue loss (assuming undergraduate, in-state tuition rates) would be \$286,160. This is broken down by unit as follows: (1) \$170,100 for UConn; (2) \$69,980 at the Connecticut State Universities; and (3) \$46,080 at CT State.

Sections 4 - 5 have no fiscal impact. They expand a requirement to add points to an examination for employment to peacetime veterans. Previously this requirement was only available to veterans with wartime service. This is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities as it would not increase the number of individuals hired.

Sections 6 - 7 result in a cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs and its Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines Fund (SSMF) of an estimated \$540,000 annually beginning in FY 26. The bill expands access to temporary financial assistance via the SSMF to include peacetime veterans. It is anticipated this will result in around 200 veterans applying.

Section 8 results in a potential minimal annual revenue loss beginning in FY 26 to the Special Transportation Fund by broadening the eligibility for certain motor vehicle benefits and fee exemptions. The population that would be newly eligible under this section is unknown

but expected to be small.

Section 9 results in a revenue loss to all municipalities annually beginning in FY 27 by expanding eligibility for the property tax exemption described in CGS Sec. 12-81(19). If the newly eligible peacetime veterans and spouses own homes at the state average rate¹, it would result in an estimated annual revenue loss of \$800,000. The impact will be dependent on the number of peacetime veterans and their spouses who apply for the exemption.

Section 10 removes wartime service as a requirement for a veteran to receive an honor guard detail at a funeral resulting in a cost to the Military Department of approximately \$120,000 in FY 26² and \$160,000 annually beginning in FY 27. Removing the wartime service requirement increases the number of veterans eligible for honor guard details at funerals by 35%.³

Section 11 exempts all veterans from a municipal permit fee related to peddler or hawking on public streets or state highways. Previously this exemption only applied to veterans with wartime service. This may result in a revenue loss beginning in FY 26 to the extent municipalities have an ordinance that imposes this fee.⁴ Any revenue loss will be dependent on the number of permit fees that would have otherwise been required.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation and the number of peacetime veterans who use the benefits described above.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CT/HSD310223>

² The cost in FY 26 reflects nine months of expenditures due to the bills October 1, 2025, effective date.

³ There are approximately 112,000 wartime veterans and 40,000 peacetime veterans in the state. The average honor guard expenditures for wartime veterans from FY 20 to FY 24 is approximately \$455,000 per year.

⁴ The maximum for this permit fee is \$200 a year.

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 376*****AN ACT ELIMINATING SERVICE IN TIME OF WAR AS AN ELIGIBILITY CRITERION FOR CERTAIN STATE AND MUNICIPAL VETERANS' BENEFITS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill eliminates the requirement that a veteran have wartime service to qualify for certain state and municipal veterans' benefits. In doing so, it extends these benefits to veterans who are otherwise eligible but did not serve during a statutorily defined period of war for the minimum amount of time currently required under the law (generally at least 90 days; see BACKGROUND).

The bill also makes technical and minor changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, for the provisions on tuition waivers (§§ 1-3) and October 1, 2025, for the remaining provisions, with the provision on property tax exemptions (§ 9) applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date.

STATE VETERANS' BENEFITS

The bill extends certain financial, employment, and other benefits to eligible veterans who do not have qualifying wartime service (and, for certain benefits that accrue to them, their eligible spouses, certain surviving parents, and dependent children). These benefits include the following:

1. a property tax exemption of at least \$1,000 (plus additional amounts the municipality may, and in some cases must, provide to veterans who are eligible for this exemption) (§ 9);
2. tuition waivers for undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the state's public colleges and universities (§§ 1-3);

3. additional points on state and municipal civil service exams for initial appointments (§§ 4 & 5);
4. temporary financial assistance from the veterans affairs commissioner (§ 6);
5. temporary aid from the Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund (§ 7);
6. free motor vehicle registration for up to three vehicles and special license plates for veterans with certain disabilities (§ 8 & CGS § 14-49(o));
7. funeral honor guards (§ 10); and
8. exemption from any municipal fee for a hawker or peddler permit (§ 11).

BACKGROUND

Definition of Veteran

Under state law, a veteran is anyone who was honorably discharged, or released under honorable conditions, from active service in the United States armed forces. This also includes anyone who was released from active service with an other than honorable (OTH) discharge based on a "qualifying condition."

A qualifying condition is a (1) post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury diagnosis by a licensed health care professional at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility; (2) military sexual trauma disclosed to such a health care professional; or (3) determination by the Qualifying Review Board that sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression was more likely than not the primary reason for the OTH discharge (CGS § 27-103).

Wartime Service

By law, to be eligible for state benefits that require service in a time of war, a veteran must have served at least 90 cumulative days during a statutorily specified period of war, as described in the table below. A

veteran who served fewer days may be eligible if he or she (1) was separated from service earlier because of either a service-connected U.S. Veterans' Administration-rated disability or an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty or (2) served for the duration of a period of war that lasted fewer than 90 days (CGS § 27-103(a)(3)).

The table below summarizes the dates and service conditions that constitute service during a period of war for state veterans' benefits (CGS § 27-103(a)(4)). (An end date to the Persian Gulf War period has not been prescribed by presidential proclamation or by law. As a result, it is ongoing for determining veterans' benefits.)

Table: Post-1940 "Periods of War"

Operation	Covered Period	Service Condition
World War II	12/7/41—12/31/46*	Active service during the covered period
Korean conflict	6/27/50—1/31/55	Active service during the covered period
Lebanon conflict	7/1/58—11/1/58 or 9/29/82—3/30/84	Combat or combat-support role in Lebanon during the covered periods
Vietnam era	2/28/61—7/1/75	Active service during the covered period
Grenada invasion	10/25/83—12/15/83	Combat or combat-support role in Grenada during the covered period
Operation Earnest Will (escort of Kuwaiti tankers flying U.S. flag in the Persian Gulf)	7/24/87—8/1/90	Combat or combat-support role in the operation during the covered period
Panama invasion	12/20/89—1/31/90	Combat or combat-support role in the invasion during the covered period
Persian Gulf War	8/2/90 until a date prescribed by the President or law	Active service during the covered period
Afghanistan	10/24/01—8/30/21	Active service during the covered period
Iraq	3/19/03—12/31/11 or 6/1/14—12/9/21	Active service during the covered period

*For certain property tax exemptions, the end date is considered 12/31/47 (CGS § 12-86)

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 0 (02/18/2025)