



General Assembly

**Amendment**

January Session, 2025

LCO No. 10029



Offered by:

REP. FOSTER, 57<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. HONIG, 8<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
REP. ANDERSON, 62<sup>nd</sup> Dist.  
SEN. GORDON, 35<sup>th</sup> Dist.

To: House Bill No. 6438

File No. 54

Cal. No. 62

**"AN ACT CONCERNING VETERANS' AFFAIRS IN CONNECTICUT."**

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and substitute the  
2 following in lieu thereof:

3 "Section 1. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The sum of one hundred sixty-nine  
4 thousand dollars is appropriated to the Military Department from the  
5 General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, for the purpose  
6 of supporting the department's joint enlistment enhancement program.

7 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 17b-28i of the general statutes is  
8 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
9 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

10 (a) To the extent permissible by federal law, the Commissioner of  
11 Social Services shall disregard [federal] (1) United States Department of  
12 Veterans Affairs-administered Aid and Attendance pension benefits

13 that are granted to a veteran or the surviving spouse of such veteran  
14 when determining income eligibility for the state's Medicare savings,  
15 medical assistance and energy assistance programs administered under  
16 section 17b-2, and (2) all United States Department of Veterans Affairs-  
17 administered non-service-connected pension benefits and Housebound  
18 pension benefits that are granted to a veteran or the surviving spouse of  
19 such veteran when determining income eligibility for the state's  
20 Medicare savings, HUSKY A, HUSKY D and energy assistance  
21 programs administered under section 17b-2. As used in this subsection,  
22 "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, and  
23 "HUSKY A" and "HUSKY D" have the same meanings as provided in  
24 section 17b-290.

25 Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 17b-104 of the general statutes is  
26 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
27 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

28 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall administer the program  
29 of state supplementation to the Supplemental Security Income Program  
30 provided for by the Social Security Act and state law. The commissioner  
31 may delegate any powers and authority to any deputy, assistant,  
32 investigator or supervisor, who shall have, within the scope of the  
33 power and authority so delegated, all of the power and authority of the  
34 Commissioner of Social Services. The standard of need for the  
35 temporary family assistance program shall be fifty-five per cent of the  
36 federal poverty level. The commissioner shall make a reinvestigation, at  
37 least every twelve months, of all cases receiving aid from the state,  
38 except that such reinvestigation may be conducted every twenty-four  
39 months for recipients of assistance to the elderly or disabled with stable  
40 circumstances, and shall maintain all case records of the several  
41 programs administered by the Department of Social Services so that  
42 such records show, at all times, full information with respect to  
43 eligibility of the applicant or recipient. In the determination of need  
44 under any public assistance program, such income or earnings shall be  
45 disregarded as federal law requires, and such income or earnings may

46 be disregarded as federal law permits. In determining eligibility, the  
47 commissioner shall disregard from income (1) all United States  
48 Department of Veterans Affairs-administered non-service-connected  
49 pension benefits, Aid and Attendance pension benefits and  
50 Housebound pension benefits that are granted to a veteran, as defined  
51 [under] in section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran, and  
52 (2) any tax refund or advance payment with respect to a refundable  
53 credit to the same extent such refund or advance payment would be  
54 disregarded under 26 USC 6409 in any federal program or state or local  
55 program financed in whole or in part with federal funds. The  
56 commissioner shall encourage and promulgate such incentive earning  
57 programs as are permitted by federal law and regulations.

58 Sec. 4. Subsection (c) of section 17b-191 of the general statutes is  
59 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
60 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

61 (c) To be eligible for cash assistance under the program, a person shall  
62 (1) be (A) eighteen years of age or older; (B) a minor found by a court to  
63 be emancipated pursuant to section 46b-150; or (C) under eighteen years  
64 of age and the commissioner determines good cause for such person's  
65 eligibility, and (2) not have assets exceeding five hundred dollars or, if  
66 such person is married, such person and his or her spouse shall not have  
67 assets exceeding one thousand dollars. In determining eligibility, the  
68 commissioner shall [not consider as] disregard from income (A) all  
69 United States Department of Veterans Affairs-administered non-  
70 service-connected pension benefits, Aid and Attendance pension  
71 benefits and Housebound pension benefits that are granted to a veteran,  
72 as defined in section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran;  
73 and (B) any tax refund or advance payment with respect to a refundable  
74 credit to the same extent such refund or advance payment would be  
75 disregarded under 26 USC 6409 in any federal program or state or local  
76 program financed in whole or in part with federal funds. No person who  
77 is a substance abuser and refuses or fails to enter available, appropriate  
78 treatment shall be eligible for cash assistance under the program until

79 such person enters treatment. No person whose benefits from the  
80 temporary family assistance program have terminated as a result of  
81 time-limited benefits or for failure to comply with a program  
82 requirement shall be eligible for cash assistance under the program.

83 Sec. 5. Section 17b-256f of the general statutes is repealed and the  
84 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and*  
85 *applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

86 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall increase income  
87 disregards used to determine eligibility by the Department of Social  
88 Services for the federal Qualified Medicare Beneficiary, the Specified  
89 Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary and the Qualifying Individual  
90 programs, administered in accordance with the provisions of 42 USC  
91 1396d(p), by such amounts that shall result in persons with income that  
92 is (1) less than two hundred eleven per cent of the federal poverty level  
93 qualifying for the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary program, (2) at or  
94 above two hundred eleven per cent of the federal poverty level but less  
95 than two hundred thirty-one per cent of the federal poverty level  
96 qualifying for the Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary program,  
97 and (3) at or above two hundred thirty-one per cent of the federal  
98 poverty level but less than two hundred forty-six per cent of the federal  
99 poverty level qualifying for the Qualifying Individual program.

100 (b) The commissioner shall not apply an asset test for eligibility under  
101 the Medicare Savings Program. The commissioner shall [not consider as  
102 income] disregard from income all United States Department of  
103 Veterans Affairs-administered non-service-connected pension benefits,  
104 Aid and Attendance pension benefits and Housebound pension benefits  
105 that are granted to a veteran, as defined in section 27-103, or the  
106 surviving spouse of such veteran. The Commissioner of Social Services,  
107 pursuant to section 17b-10, may implement policies and procedures to  
108 administer the provisions of this section while in the process of adopting  
109 such policies and procedures in regulation form, provided the  
110 commissioner prints notice of the intent to adopt the regulations on the  
111 department's Internet web site and the eRegulations System not later

112 than twenty days after the date of implementation. Such policies and  
113 procedures shall be valid until the time final regulations are adopted.

114 Sec. 6. Subsection (a) of section 17b-261 of the general statutes is  
115 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
116 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

117 (a) Medical assistance shall be provided for any otherwise eligible  
118 person (1) whose income, including any available support from legally  
119 liable relatives and the income of the person's spouse or dependent  
120 child, is not more than one hundred fifty-nine per cent, pending  
121 approval of a federal waiver applied for pursuant to subsection (e) of  
122 this section, of the benefit amount paid to a person with no income  
123 under the temporary family assistance program, and (2) if such person  
124 is an institutionalized individual as defined in Section 1917 of the Social  
125 Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(h)(3), and has not made an assignment or  
126 transfer or other disposition of property for less than fair market value  
127 for the purpose of establishing eligibility for benefits or assistance under  
128 this section. Any such disposition shall be treated in accordance with  
129 Section 1917(c) of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(c). Any  
130 disposition of property made on behalf of an applicant or recipient or  
131 the spouse of an applicant or recipient by a guardian, conservator,  
132 person authorized to make such disposition pursuant to a power of  
133 attorney or other person so authorized by law shall be attributed to such  
134 applicant, recipient or spouse. A disposition of property ordered by a  
135 court shall be evaluated in accordance with the standards applied to any  
136 other such disposition for the purpose of determining eligibility. The  
137 commissioner shall establish the standards for eligibility for medical  
138 assistance at one hundred fifty-nine per cent of the benefit amount paid  
139 to a household of equal size with no income under the temporary family  
140 assistance program. In determining eligibility, the commissioner shall  
141 not consider as income United States Department of Veterans Affairs-  
142 administered Aid and Attendance pension benefits that are granted to a  
143 veteran, as defined in section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such  
144 veteran. Except as provided in section 17b-277 and section 17b-292, the

145 medical assistance program shall provide coverage to persons under the  
146 age of nineteen with household income up to one hundred ninety-six  
147 per cent of the federal poverty level without an asset limit and to  
148 persons under the age of nineteen, who qualify for coverage under  
149 Section 1931 of the Social Security Act, with household income not  
150 exceeding one hundred ninety-six per cent of the federal poverty level  
151 without an asset limit, and their parents and needy caretaker relatives,  
152 who qualify for coverage under Section 1931 of the Social Security Act,  
153 with household income not exceeding one hundred thirty-three per cent  
154 of the federal poverty level without an asset limit. Such levels shall be  
155 based on the regional differences in such benefit amount, if applicable,  
156 unless such levels based on regional differences are not in conformance  
157 with federal law. Any income in excess of the applicable amounts shall  
158 be applied as may be required by said federal law, and assistance shall  
159 be granted for the balance of the cost of authorized medical assistance.  
160 The Commissioner of Social Services shall provide applicants for  
161 assistance under this section, at the time of application, with a written  
162 statement advising them of (A) the effect of an assignment or transfer or  
163 other disposition of property on eligibility for benefits or assistance, (B)  
164 the effect that having income that exceeds the limits prescribed in this  
165 subsection will have with respect to program eligibility, and (C) the  
166 availability of, and eligibility for, services provided by the Connecticut  
167 Home Visiting System, established pursuant to section 17b-751b. For  
168 coverage dates on or after January 1, 2014, the department shall use the  
169 modified adjusted gross income financial eligibility rules set forth in  
170 Section 1902(e)(14) of the Social Security Act and the implementing  
171 regulations to determine eligibility for HUSKY A, HUSKY B and  
172 HUSKY D applicants, as defined in section 17b-290. To the extent  
173 permissible under federal law, the Commissioner of Social Services shall  
174 disregard all United States Department of Veterans Affairs-  
175 administered non-service-connected pension benefits, Aid and  
176 Attendance pension benefits and Housebound pension benefits that are  
177 granted to a veteran or the surviving spouse of such veteran when  
178 determining income eligibility for HUSKY A and HUSKY D applicants.  
179 Persons who are determined ineligible for assistance pursuant to this

180 section shall be provided a written statement notifying such persons of  
181 their ineligibility and advising such persons of their potential eligibility  
182 for one of the other insurance affordability programs as defined in 42  
183 CFR 435.4.

184 Sec. 7. Subsection (l) of section 17b-342 of the general statutes is  
185 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
186 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

187 (l) In determining eligibility for the program described in this section,  
188 the commissioner shall [not consider as] disregard from income (1) all  
189 United States Department of Veterans Affairs-administered non-  
190 service-connected pension benefits, Aid and Attendance pension  
191 benefits and Housebound pension benefits that are granted to a veteran,  
192 as defined in section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran,  
193 and (2) any tax refund or advance payment with respect to a refundable  
194 credit to the same extent such refund or advance payment would be  
195 disregarded under 26 USC 6409 in any federal program or state or local  
196 program financed in whole or in part with federal funds.

197 Sec. 8. Subsection (a) of section 17b-801 of the general statutes is  
198 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
199 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

200 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall administer a state-  
201 appropriated fuel assistance program to provide, within available  
202 appropriations, fuel assistance to elderly and disabled persons whose  
203 household gross income is above the income eligibility guidelines for  
204 the Connecticut energy assistance program but does not exceed two  
205 hundred per cent of federal poverty guidelines. The income eligibility  
206 guidelines for the state-appropriated fuel assistance program shall be  
207 determined, annually, by the Commissioner of Social Services, in  
208 conjunction with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management.  
209 In determining eligibility, the commissioner shall [not consider as  
210 income] disregard from income all United States Department of  
211 Veterans Affairs-administered non-service-connected pension benefits,

212 Aid and Attendance pension benefits and Housebound pension benefits  
213 that are granted to a veteran, as defined under section 27-103, or the  
214 surviving spouse of such veteran. The commissioner may adopt  
215 regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to  
216 implement the provisions of this subsection.

217 Sec. 9. Section 10a-26 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
218 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

219 (a) For the purposes of this section, sections 10a-77, as amended by  
220 this act, 10a-99, as amended by this act, and 10a-105, as amended by this  
221 act, and this part: (1) A "full-time student" means a student who has been  
222 registered and who has been accepted for matriculation at a constituent  
223 unit of the state system of higher education in a course of study leading  
224 to an associate, bachelor or advanced degree or whose course of  
225 instruction or credit hour load indicates pursuit toward a degree; (2)  
226 "tuition" means a direct charge for institutional programs, which is  
227 clearly delineated from any other fees.

228 (b) In order to defray part of the cost of the higher education  
229 institutional programs at the constituent units of the state system of  
230 higher education, tuition shall be charged as provided in [said] sections  
231 10a-77, as amended by this act, 10a-99, as amended by this act, and 10a-  
232 105, as amended by this act, for each full-time student or shall be  
233 prorated in the case of a student carrying less than seventy-five per cent  
234 of the credit hours defined as a full-time load by the institution. Any  
235 person enrolled in and paying extension fees for a course in an  
236 educational extension program, [or] including for a course in a summer  
237 or winter school session or intersession, shall not be charged tuition for  
238 such course.

239 (c) Fees charged for educational extension programs, [and for]  
240 including for summer or winter school sessions or intersessions, under  
241 sections 10a-77, as amended by this act, 10a-99, as amended by this act,  
242 and 10a-105, as amended by this act, shall not be deemed to be tuition  
243 within the meaning of this section.



244 Sec. 10. Subsections (d) to (g), inclusive, of section 10a-77 of the  
245 general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
246 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

247 (d) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition at any of  
248 the regional community-technical colleges (1) for any dependent child  
249 of a person whom the armed forces of the United States has declared to  
250 be missing in action or to have been a prisoner of war while serving in  
251 such armed forces after January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted  
252 for admission to such institution and is a resident of the state at the time  
253 such child is accepted for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the  
254 provisions of subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in  
255 section 27-103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in  
256 section 27-103, except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in  
257 time of war" shall not include time spent in attendance at a military  
258 service academy, which veteran has been accepted for admission to such  
259 institution and is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is  
260 accepted for admission to such institution. Said board shall also waive  
261 for any such veteran the payment of any extension fees under section  
262 10a-26, as amended by this act, for educational extension programs, (3)  
263 for any resident of the state sixty-two years of age or older, provided, at  
264 the end of the regular registration period, there are enrolled in the  
265 course a sufficient number of students other than those residents eligible  
266 for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to offer the course in which  
267 such resident intends to enroll and there is space available in such  
268 course after accommodating all such students, (4) for any student  
269 attending the Connecticut State Police Academy who is enrolled in a law  
270 enforcement program at said academy offered in coordination with a  
271 regional community-technical college which accredits courses taken in  
272 such program, (5) for any active member of the Connecticut Army or  
273 Air National Guard who (A) has been certified by the Adjutant General  
274 or such Adjutant General's designee as a member in good standing of  
275 the guard, and (B) is enrolled or accepted for admission to such  
276 institution on a full-time or part-time basis in an undergraduate degree-  
277 granting program. Said board shall also waive for any such member the

278 payment of any extension fees under section 10a-26, as amended by this  
279 act, for educational extension programs, (6) for any dependent child of  
280 a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or  
281 auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or  
282 member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal employee, or (D)  
283 state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (7)  
284 for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or surviving  
285 spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a resident of this state, (8)  
286 for any dependent child of a resident of the state who was killed in a  
287 multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and  
288 Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, and (9) for any resident of the state  
289 who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a person who was  
290 killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed  
291 forces of the United States on or after September 11, 2001, and who was  
292 a resident of this state. If any person who receives a tuition waiver in  
293 accordance with the provisions of this subsection also receives  
294 educational reimbursement from an employer, such waiver shall be  
295 reduced by the amount of such educational reimbursement. Veterans  
296 and members of the National Guard described in subdivision (5) of this  
297 subsection shall be given the same status as students not receiving  
298 tuition waivers in registering for courses at regional community-  
299 technical colleges. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 10a-30, as  
300 used in this subsection, "domiciled in this state" includes domicile for  
301 less than one year.

302 (e) (1) If any veteran described in subsection (d) of this section has  
303 applied for federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Veterans  
304 Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the board of trustees shall waive the  
305 payment of tuition and extension fees at any of the regional community-  
306 technical colleges for such veteran in accordance with subdivision (2) of  
307 this subsection. If any such veteran certifies to said board that such  
308 veteran's application for such federal educational assistance has been  
309 denied or withdrawn, said board of trustees shall waive the payment of  
310 tuition and extension fees in accordance with subsection (d) of this  
311 section.

312 (2) (A) For purposes of this subdivision, "veteran tuition benefit"  
313 means the portion of federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
314 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 to be paid to a regional  
315 community-technical college on behalf of a veteran that represents  
316 payment for tuition and extension fees. Such portion shall be calculated  
317 by multiplying (i) the total amount of such federal educational  
318 assistance to be paid to a regional community-technical college on  
319 behalf of such veteran by (ii) an amount obtained by dividing (I) the sum  
320 of the actual tuition and extension fees charged by such college to such  
321 veteran by (II) the sum of the actual tuition, extension fees and other fees  
322 charged by such college to such veteran.

323 (B) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition and  
324 extension fees in excess of the veteran tuition benefit at any of the  
325 regional community-technical colleges for such veteran.

326 (f) Said board shall set aside from its anticipated regional community-  
327 technical college tuition revenue, an amount not less than that required  
328 by said board's tuition policy. Such funds shall be used to provide  
329 tuition waivers, tuition remissions, grants for educational expenses and  
330 student employment for residents enrolled in regional community-  
331 technical colleges as full or part-time matriculated students in a degree-  
332 granting program, or enrolled in a precollege remedial program, who  
333 demonstrate substantial financial need. Said board may also set aside  
334 from its anticipated tuition revenue an additional amount equal to one  
335 per cent of [said] such tuition revenue for financial assistance for  
336 students who would not otherwise be eligible for financial assistance  
337 but who do have a financial need as determined by the college in  
338 accordance with this subsection. In determining such financial need, the  
339 college shall exclude the value of equity in the principal residence of the  
340 student's parents or legal guardians, or in the student's principal  
341 residence if the student is not considered to be a dependent of his  
342 parents or legal guardians and shall assess the earnings of a dependent  
343 student at the rate of thirty per cent.

344 (g) The Regional Community-Technical Colleges Operating Fund

345 shall be reimbursed for the amount by which the tuition and extension  
346 fee waivers granted under subsection (d) of this section exceed five per  
347 cent of tuition and extension fee revenue through an annual state  
348 appropriation. The board of trustees shall request such an appropriation  
349 and [said] such appropriation shall be based upon an estimate of tuition  
350 and extension fee revenue loss using tuition and extension fee rates in  
351 effect for the fiscal year in which such appropriation will apply.

352 Sec. 11. Subsections (d) to (g), inclusive, of section 10a-99 of the  
353 general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
354 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

355 (d) Said board shall waive the payment of tuition fees for  
356 undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the Connecticut State  
357 University System (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the  
358 armed forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or  
359 to have been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after  
360 January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to such  
361 institution and is a resident of the state at the time such child is accepted  
362 for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the provisions of  
363 subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-  
364 103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,  
365 except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall  
366 not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy,  
367 which veteran has been accepted for admission to such institution and  
368 is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for  
369 admission to such institution. Said board shall also waive for any such  
370 veteran the payment of any extension fees under section 10a-26, as  
371 amended by this act, for educational extension programs, (3) for any  
372 resident of the state sixty-two years of age or older who has been  
373 accepted for admission to such institution, provided (A) such resident  
374 is enrolled in a degree-granting program, or (B) at the end of the regular  
375 registration period, there are enrolled in the course a sufficient number  
376 of students other than those residents eligible for waivers pursuant to  
377 this subdivision to offer the course in which such resident intends to

378 enroll and there is space available in such course after accommodating  
379 all such students, (4) for any student attending the Connecticut Police  
380 Academy who is enrolled in a law enforcement program at said  
381 academy offered in coordination with the university which accredits  
382 courses taken in such program, (5) for any active member of the  
383 Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A) has been certified by  
384 the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's designee as a member  
385 in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled or accepted for  
386 admission to such institution on a full-time or part-time basis in an  
387 undergraduate or graduate degree-granting program. Said board shall  
388 also waive for any such member the payment of any extension fees  
389 under section 10a-26, as amended by this act, for educational extension  
390 programs, (6) for any dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined  
391 in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B)  
392 firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire  
393 company, (C) municipal employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in  
394 section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (7) for any resident of this state  
395 who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist  
396 victim who was a resident of the state, (8) for any dependent child of a  
397 resident of the state who was killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the  
398 intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005,  
399 and (9) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or  
400 surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action while performing  
401 active military duty with the armed forces of the United States on or  
402 after September 11, 2001, and who was a resident of this state. If any  
403 person who receives a tuition waiver in accordance with the provisions  
404 of this subsection also receives educational reimbursement from an  
405 employer, such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such  
406 educational reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National  
407 Guard described in subdivision (5) of this subsection shall be given the  
408 same status as students not receiving tuition waivers in registering for  
409 courses at Connecticut state universities. Notwithstanding the  
410 provisions of section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in  
411 this state" includes domicile for less than one year.

412 (e) (1) If any veteran described in subsection (d) of this section has  
413 applied for federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Veterans  
414 Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the board of trustees shall waive the  
415 payment of tuition and extension fees at the Connecticut State  
416 University System for such veteran in accordance with subdivision (2)  
417 of this subsection. If any such veteran certifies to said board that such  
418 veteran's application for such federal educational assistance has been  
419 denied or withdrawn, said board of trustees shall waive the payment of  
420 tuition and extension fees in accordance with subsection (d) of this  
421 section.

422 (2) (A) For purposes of this subdivision, "veteran tuition benefit"  
423 means the portion of federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
424 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 to be paid to the  
425 Connecticut State University System on behalf of a veteran that  
426 represents payment for tuition and extension fees. Such portion shall be  
427 calculated by multiplying (i) the total amount of such federal  
428 educational assistance to be paid to the Connecticut State University  
429 System on behalf of such veteran by (ii) an amount obtained by dividing  
430 (I) the sum of the actual tuition and extension fees charged by the  
431 Connecticut State University System to such veteran by (II) the sum of  
432 the actual tuition, extension fees and other fees charged by the  
433 Connecticut State University System to such veteran.

434 (B) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition and  
435 extension fees in excess of the veteran tuition benefit at the Connecticut  
436 State University System for such veteran.

437 (f) Said board shall set aside from its anticipated tuition revenue, an  
438 amount not less than that required by the board of governors' tuition  
439 policy established under subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 10a-  
440 6. Such funds shall be used to provide tuition waivers, tuition  
441 remissions, grants for educational expenses and student employment  
442 for any undergraduate or graduate student who is enrolled as a full or  
443 part-time matriculated student in a degree-granting program, or  
444 enrolled in a precollege remedial program, and who demonstrates

445 substantial financial need. Said board may also set aside from its  
446 anticipated tuition revenue an additional amount equal to one per cent  
447 of [said] such tuition revenue for financial assistance for students who  
448 would not otherwise be eligible for financial assistance but who do have  
449 a financial need as determined by the university in accordance with this  
450 subsection. In determining such financial need, the university shall  
451 exclude the value of equity in the principal residence of the student's  
452 parents or legal guardians, or in the student's principal residence if the  
453 student is not considered to be a dependent of his parents or legal  
454 guardians and shall assess the earnings of a dependent student at the  
455 rate of thirty per cent.

456 (g) The Connecticut State University System Operating Fund shall be  
457 reimbursed for the amount by which the tuition and extension fee  
458 waivers granted under subsection (d) of this section exceed two and  
459 one-half per cent of tuition and extension fee revenue through an annual  
460 state appropriation. The board of trustees shall request such an  
461 appropriation and [said] such appropriation shall be based upon an  
462 estimate of tuition and extension fee revenue loss using tuition and  
463 extension fee rates in effect for the fiscal year in which such  
464 appropriation will apply.

465 Sec. 12. Subsections (e) to (h), inclusive, of section 10a-105 of the  
466 general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
467 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

468 (e) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition fees for  
469 any undergraduate or graduate degree program at The University of  
470 Connecticut (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the armed  
471 forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or to have  
472 been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after January  
473 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to The University  
474 of Connecticut and is a resident of the state at the time such child is  
475 accepted for admission to said institution, (2) subject to the provisions  
476 of subsection (f) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-  
477 103, 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. Said board shall also waive for any such veteran the payment of any extension fees under section 10a-26, as amended by this act, for educational extension programs, (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. Said board shall also waive for any such member the payment of any extension fees under section 10a-26, as amended by this act, for educational extension programs, (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 person who receives a tuition waiver in



513 accordance with the provisions of this subsection also receives  
514 educational reimbursement from an employer, such waiver shall be  
515 reduced by the amount of such educational reimbursement. Veterans  
516 and members of the National Guard described in subdivision (4) of this  
517 subsection shall be given the same status as students not receiving  
518 tuition waivers in registering for courses at The University of  
519 Connecticut. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 10a-30, as used  
520 in this subsection, "domiciled in this state" includes domicile for less  
521 than one year.

522 (f) (1) If any veteran described in subsection (e) of this section has  
523 applied for federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Veterans  
524 Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the board of trustees shall waive the  
525 payment of tuition and extension fees at The University of Connecticut  
526 for such veteran in accordance with subdivision (2) of this subsection. If  
527 any such veteran certifies to said board that such veteran's application  
528 for such federal educational assistance has been denied or withdrawn,  
529 said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition and extension  
530 fees in accordance with subsection (d) of this section.

531 (2) (A) For purposes of this subdivision, "veteran tuition benefit"  
532 means the portion of federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
533 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 to be paid to The  
534 University of Connecticut on behalf of a veteran that represents  
535 payment for tuition and extension fees. Such portion shall be calculated  
536 by multiplying (i) the total amount of such federal educational  
537 assistance to be paid to The University of Connecticut on behalf of such  
538 veteran by (ii) an amount obtained by dividing (I) the sum of the actual  
539 tuition and extension fees charged by The University of Connecticut to  
540 such veteran by (II) the sum of the actual tuition, extension fees and  
541 other fees charged by The University of Connecticut to such veteran.

542 (B) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition and  
543 extension fees in excess of the veteran tuition benefit at The University  
544 of Connecticut for such veteran.

545 (g) Said board of trustees shall set aside from its anticipated tuition  
546 revenue, an amount not less than that required by the board of  
547 governors' tuition policy established under subdivision (3) of subsection  
548 (a) of section 10a-6. Such funds shall be used to provide tuition waivers,  
549 tuition remissions, grants for educational expenses and student  
550 employment for any undergraduate, graduate or professional student  
551 who is enrolled as a full or part-time matriculated student in a degree-  
552 granting program, or enrolled in a precollege remedial program, and  
553 who demonstrates substantial financial need. Said board may also set  
554 aside from its anticipated tuition revenue an additional amount equal to  
555 one per cent of [said] such tuition revenue for financial assistance for  
556 students who would not otherwise be eligible for financial assistance  
557 but who do have a financial need as determined by the university in  
558 accordance with this subsection. In determining such financial need, the  
559 university shall exclude the value of equity in the principal residence of  
560 the student's parents or legal guardians, or in the student's principal  
561 residence if the student is not considered to be a dependent of his  
562 parents or legal guardians and shall assess the earnings of a dependent  
563 student at the rate of thirty per cent.

564 (h) The University of Connecticut Operating Fund shall be  
565 reimbursed for the amount by which tuition and extension fee waivers  
566 granted under subsection (e) of this section exceed two and one-half per  
567 cent of tuition and extension fee revenue through an annual state  
568 appropriation. The board of trustees shall request such an appropriation  
569 and [said] such appropriation shall be based upon an estimate of tuition  
570 and extension fee revenue loss using tuition and extension fee rates in  
571 effect for the fiscal year in which such appropriation will apply.

572 Sec. 13. Section 10a-143 of the general statutes is amended by adding  
573 subsections (h) and (i) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

574 (NEW) (h) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall waive  
575 the payment of tuition fees at Charter Oak State College (1) subject to  
576 the provisions of subsection (i) of this section, for any veteran, as defined  
577 in section 27-103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in

578 section 27-103, except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in  
579 time of war" shall not include time spent in attendance at a military  
580 service academy, which veteran has been accepted for admission to  
581 Charter Oak State College and is domiciled in this state at the time such  
582 veteran is accepted for admission to said institution, and (2) for any  
583 active member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A)  
584 has been certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's  
585 designee as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled  
586 or accepted for admission to Charter Oak State College on a full-time or  
587 part-time basis in a degree-granting program. If any such veteran or  
588 member of the National Guard who receives a tuition fee waiver in  
589 accordance with the provisions of this subsection also receives  
590 educational reimbursement from an employer, such waiver shall be  
591 reduced by the amount of such educational reimbursement. Veterans  
592 and members of the National Guard described in this subsection shall  
593 be given the same status as students not receiving tuition fee waivers in  
594 registering for courses at Charter Oak State College. Notwithstanding  
595 the provisions of section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled  
596 in this state" includes domicile for less than one year.

597 (NEW) (i) (1) If any veteran described in subsection (h) of this section  
598 has applied for federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
599 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the Board of Regents for  
600 Higher Education shall waive the payment of tuition fees at Charter Oak  
601 State College for such veteran in accordance with subdivision (2) of this  
602 subsection. If any such veteran certifies to said board of regents that  
603 such veteran's application for such federal educational assistance has  
604 been denied or withdrawn, said board of regents shall waive the  
605 payment of tuition fees in accordance with subsection (h) of this section.

606 (2) (A) For purposes of this subdivision, "veteran tuition benefit"  
607 means the portion of federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
608 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 to be paid to Charter Oak  
609 State College on behalf of a veteran that represents payment for tuition  
610 fees. Such portion shall be calculated by multiplying (i) the total amount

611 of such federal educational assistance to be paid to Charter Oak State  
612 College on behalf of such veteran by (ii) an amount obtained by dividing  
613 (I) the actual tuition fees charged by Charter Oak State College to such  
614 veteran by (II) the sum of the actual tuition fees and other fees charged  
615 by Charter Oak State College to such veteran.

616 (B) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall waive the  
617 payment of tuition fees in excess of the veteran tuition benefit at Charter  
618 Oak State College for such veteran.

619 Sec. 14. Section 51-297 of the general statutes, as amended by section  
620 201 of public act 23-204, is repealed and the following is substituted in  
621 lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

622 (a) A public defender, assistant public defender or deputy assistant  
623 public defender shall make such investigation of the financial status of  
624 each person he has been appointed to represent or who has requested  
625 representation based on indigency, as he deems necessary. He shall  
626 cause the person to complete a written statement under oath or  
627 affirmation setting forth his liabilities and assets, income and sources  
628 thereof, and such other information which the commission shall  
629 designate and require on forms furnished for such purpose.

630 (b) Any person who intentionally falsifies a written statement in  
631 order to obtain appointment of a public defender, assistant public  
632 defender or deputy assistant public defender shall be guilty of a class A  
633 misdemeanor.

634 (c) If a public defender, assistant public defender or deputy assistant  
635 public defender is appointed to provide assistance to any person and he  
636 subsequently determines that the person is ineligible for assistance, the  
637 public defender, assistant public defender or deputy assistant public  
638 defender shall promptly inform the person in writing and make a  
639 motion to withdraw his appearance if filed, or his appointment if made  
640 by the court, as soon as it is practical to do so without prejudice to the  
641 case, giving the defendant a reasonable time to secure private counsel.

642 If the withdrawal is granted by the court, the person shall reimburse the  
643 commission for any assistance which has been provided for which the  
644 person is ineligible.

645 (d) Reimbursement to the commission shall be made in accordance  
646 with a schedule of reasonable charges for public defender services  
647 which shall be provided by the commission.

648 (e) The Chief Public Defender or anyone serving under him may  
649 institute an investigation into the financial status of each defendant at  
650 such times as the circumstances shall warrant. In connection therewith,  
651 he shall have the authority to require a defendant or the parents,  
652 guardians or other persons responsible for the support of a minor  
653 defendant, child or youth, or those persons holding property in trust or  
654 otherwise for a defendant, child or youth, to execute and deliver such  
655 written authorizations as may be necessary to provide the Chief Public  
656 Defender, or anyone serving under him, with access to records of public  
657 or private sources, otherwise confidential, or any other information,  
658 which may be relevant to the making of a decision as to eligibility under  
659 this chapter. The Chief Public Defender, the Deputy Chief Public  
660 Defender, and each public defender, assistant public defender and  
661 deputy assistant public defender or designee, are authorized to obtain  
662 information from any office of the state or any subdivision or agency  
663 thereof on request and without payment of any fees.

664 (f) (1) As used in this chapter, "indigent defendant" means (A) a  
665 person who is formally charged with the commission of a crime  
666 punishable by imprisonment and who does not have the financial ability  
667 at the time of his request for representation to secure competent legal  
668 representation and to provide other necessary expenses of legal  
669 representation; (B) a child who has a right to counsel under the  
670 provisions of subsection (a) of section 46b-135 and who does not have  
671 the financial ability at the time of his request for representation to secure  
672 competent legal representation and to provide other necessary expenses  
673 of legal representation; or (C) any person who has a right to counsel  
674 under section 46b-136 and who does not have the financial ability at the

675 time of his request for representation to secure competent legal  
676 representation and to provide other necessary expenses of legal  
677 representation.

678 (2) An assessment determining whether a person has the financial  
679 ability to secure competent legal representation and to provide other  
680 necessary expenses of legal representation or qualifies as an indigent  
681 defendant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be based  
682 upon guidelines established by the commission. The commission shall  
683 annually establish such guidelines providing that a person whose  
684 income, which shall exclude all service-connected disability benefits  
685 administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and  
686 otherwise be calculated as described in such guidelines, is two hundred  
687 fifty per cent or less of the federal poverty level may qualify as an  
688 indigent defendant. The commission shall make such guidelines  
689 available to the public on the Division of Public Defender Service's  
690 Internet web site.

691 (g) If the Chief Public Defender or anyone serving under the Chief  
692 Public Defender determines that an individual is not eligible to receive  
693 the services of a public defender under this chapter, the individual may  
694 appeal the decision to the court before which the individual's case is  
695 pending.

696 Sec. 15. Subsection (b) of section 27-102*l* of the general statutes is  
697 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
698 *2025*):

699 (b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a manager to administer an  
700 Office of Advocacy and Assistance for the aid and benefit of veterans  
701 and their spouses, eligible dependents and family members. The office  
702 shall have a staff of not less than [ten] nineteen men and women,  
703 including [eight] not less than fourteen veterans' service officers, and  
704 not less than three clerical personnel. The manager and veterans' service  
705 officers shall be veterans, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103,  
706 or veterans who were awarded the armed forces expeditionary medal

707 for service by the armed forces.

708 (2) (A) The manager shall develop a training module on assisting and  
709 serving women veterans with regard to state or federal services or  
710 benefits and identifying and advising such veterans of community or  
711 nonprofit programs focused on assisting and serving such veterans. The  
712 manager shall hold and provide instruction for an annual training  
713 session, in accordance with such module, to each veterans' service  
714 officer and any member of a municipal veterans advisory committee,  
715 director of municipal veterans services or municipal veterans  
716 representative, as described in subsection (c) of section 27-135, or  
717 representative from an Operation Academic Support for Incoming  
718 Service Members center at a public institution of higher education in this  
719 state.

720 (B) At least one of the veterans' service officers shall be a woman  
721 having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans, who  
722 shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective upon  
723 the next opening of a veterans' service officer position occurring on or  
724 after July 1, 2010, at least two of the veterans' service officers shall be  
725 individuals having bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish, within  
726 existing authorized positions. At least two of the veterans' service  
727 officers shall, in addition to carrying out the duties under this section,  
728 be responsible for overseeing and supporting municipalities'  
729 compliance with the provisions of section 27-135. Each veterans' service  
730 officer shall (i) successfully complete a course in veterans' benefits not  
731 later than one year after commencement of employment, (ii) attend the  
732 training session described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, and  
733 (iii) be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the state.

734 (3) The office staff shall, at least twice annually, conduct a training  
735 course for any member of a municipal veterans advisory committee,  
736 director of municipal veterans services or municipal veterans  
737 representative. The office staff shall include in such training course a  
738 summary of state and federal services and benefits, the requirements  
739 under section 27-135, and any assistance the office staff may provide to

740 any such member, director or representative related to such  
741 requirements.

742 (4) (A) The office shall develop a written outreach plan identifying (i)  
743 strategies for conducting outreach to veterans and their spouses, eligible  
744 dependents and family members for purposes of providing assistance  
745 in claims for veterans' services or benefits, and (ii) to the extent possible,  
746 specific events and other opportunities to provide such assistance that  
747 are sponsored by the office or in which the office is participating. The  
748 office shall update such written outreach plan as necessary to improve  
749 the efficacy of its outreach efforts.

750 (B) The manager and each veterans' service officer shall electronically  
751 track information relating to outreach conducted or attended by the  
752 office, including, but not limited to, the title or type of any outreach  
753 event conducted or attended and the number of veterans or their  
754 spouses, eligible dependents or family members to whom substantive  
755 services or referrals were provided.

756 (C) The office shall utilize the notifications received from the  
757 administrator of each nursing home and assisted living facility in the  
758 state, pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of this section, to  
759 develop an annual schedule for each veterans' service officer to visit  
760 nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The office shall compile any  
761 information collected as a result of such visits and provide quarterly  
762 reports on such information to the Board of Trustees for the Department  
763 of Veterans Affairs.

764 (D) The office shall provide quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees  
765 for the Department of Veterans Affairs on (i) concerns raised by veterans  
766 or their spouses, eligible dependents or family members, which  
767 concerns shall be summarized by type, frequency and resolution, (ii)  
768 petitions filed by veterans or their spouses, eligible dependents or  
769 family members received by the commissioner under section 27-102l(d)-  
770 54 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies for the four preceding  
771 months, and (iii) copies of any such petitions.



772 Sec. 16. Section 32-7g of the general statutes is repealed and the  
773 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

774 (a) There is established within the Department of Economic and  
775 Community Development the Small Business Express program. Said  
776 program shall provide small businesses with various forms of financial  
777 assistance. A small business eligible for assistance through said program  
778 shall (1) employ not more than one hundred employees, (2) have  
779 operations in Connecticut, and (3) be in good standing with the payment  
780 of all state and local taxes and with all state agencies. It shall be the goal  
781 of the Department of Economic and Community Development that, on  
782 or before July 1, 2026, the Small Business Express program be self-  
783 funded and that the default rate of small businesses that receive  
784 assistance under said program be not more than twenty per cent.

785 (b) The Small Business Express program shall consist of various  
786 components, including (1) a revolving loan fund, as described in  
787 subsection (c) of this section, to support small business growth, (2) at  
788 least one minority business revolving loan fund, as described in  
789 subsection (d) of this section, to support the growth of minority-owned  
790 businesses, (3) a component established in consultation with  
791 representatives from Connecticut-based banks and a banking industry  
792 association, as described in subsection (e) of this section, and (4) a  
793 component established in consultation with Connecticut Innovations,  
794 Incorporated, as described in subsection (f) of this section. The  
795 commissioner may give preference to program applications from  
796 disabled veteran-owned businesses. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
797 section 32-5a regarding relocation limits, the department may require,  
798 as a condition of receiving financial assistance pursuant to this section,  
799 that a small business receiving such assistance shall not relocate, as  
800 defined in section 32-5a, for five years after receiving such assistance or  
801 during the term of the loan, whichever is longer. All other conditions  
802 and penalties imposed pursuant to section 32-5a shall continue to apply  
803 to such small business. As used in this subsection, (A) "disabled veteran"  
804 means a veteran, as defined in section 27-103, who has a disability rating

805 of at least thirty per cent, as determined by the United States  
806 Department of Veterans Affairs; and (B) "disabled veteran-owned  
807 business" means a small business of which greater than fifty per cent is  
808 owned by one or more disabled veterans.

809 (c) There is established as part of the Small Business Express program  
810 a revolving loan fund to provide loans, loan guarantees, loan portfolio  
811 guarantees, portfolio insurance and grants.

812 (d) (1) There is established as part of the Small Business Express  
813 program at least one revolving loan fund to provide loans to eligible  
814 small businesses that are owned by one or more members of a minority.  
815 As used in this subsection, (A) "minority business development entity"  
816 means a nonprofit organization (i) having a lending portfolio on or  
817 before June 9, 2016, from which at least seventy-five per cent of lending  
818 is provided to minority-owned businesses state-wide; and (ii) that  
819 provided technical assistance on or before June 9, 2016, provided at least  
820 seventy-five per cent of such assistance was provided to minority-  
821 owned businesses state-wide; and (B) "minority" means (i) Black  
822 Americans, including all persons having origins in any of the Black  
823 African racial groups not of Hispanic origin; (ii) Hispanic Americans,  
824 including all persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South  
825 American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race; (iii) all  
826 persons having origins in the Iberian Peninsula, including Portugal,  
827 regardless of race; (iv) women; (v) Asian Pacific Americans and Pacific  
828 islanders; or (vi) American Indians and persons having origins in any of  
829 the original peoples of North America and maintaining identifiable  
830 tribal affiliations through membership and participation or community  
831 identification.

832 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 32-7h, the  
833 commissioner shall allocate from the available funding under the Small  
834 Business Express program a total of five million dollars for grants-in-aid  
835 to not more than two minority business development entities in each of  
836 the fiscal years ending June 30, 2016, to June 30, 2020, inclusive, for the  
837 purpose of establishing and administering minority business revolving

838 loan funds. Moneys from such funds shall be used to (A) provide loans  
839 to eligible small businesses, and (B) fund the administrative costs  
840 associated with the provision of such loans by a minority business  
841 development entity, provided a minority business development entity  
842 may not use more than ten per cent of the amount received as a grant  
843 under this section to fund such costs. Such loans shall be used for  
844 acquisition or purchase of machinery and equipment, construction or  
845 leasehold improvements, relocation expenses, working capital, which  
846 may be used for payment of rent, or other business-related expenses, as  
847 authorized by the minority business development entity.

848 (3) Loans from a minority business revolving loan fund may be in  
849 amounts from ten thousand dollars to a maximum of five hundred  
850 thousand dollars, shall carry a maximum repayment rate of four per  
851 cent and shall be for a term of not more than ten years. The minority  
852 business development entity shall review and approve loan terms,  
853 conditions and collateral requirements in a manner that prioritizes job  
854 growth and retention.

855 (4) Any eligible small business owned by one or more members of a  
856 minority may apply for assistance from a minority business revolving  
857 loan fund, provided the minority business development entity shall  
858 give priority to applicants that, as part of their business plan, are  
859 creating new jobs that will be maintained for not less than twelve  
860 consecutive months.

861 (5) Loans from a minority business revolving loan fund shall be  
862 provided in such a manner that, on or before five years after the date  
863 such loan fund is established, the annual funds or revenues derived  
864 from investment income, loan repayments or any other sources received  
865 by the minority business development entity in connection with such  
866 loan fund is sufficient to fund the administrative costs associated with  
867 such loan fund.

868 (6) A minority business development entity receiving a grant  
869 pursuant to this subsection shall annually submit to the commissioner a

870 financial audit of grant expenditures until all grant moneys have been  
871 expended by such entity. Any such audit shall be prepared by an  
872 independent auditor and if the commissioner finds that any such grant  
873 is used for purposes that are not in conformity with uses set forth in  
874 subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection, the commissioner may  
875 require repayment of such grant.

876 (e) The commissioner, in consultation with representatives from  
877 Connecticut-based banks and a banking industry association, may  
878 establish as part of the Small Business Express program a component  
879 operated in collaboration with Connecticut-based banks, which may  
880 include, but need not be limited to, loan guarantees, short-term loans  
881 used as a bridge to private sector financing and the transfer of loans  
882 issued under subsection (c) of this section. Any loans issued under such  
883 component shall be used for acquisition or purchase of machinery and  
884 equipment, construction or leasehold improvements, relocation  
885 expenses, working capital, which may be used for payment of rent, or  
886 other business-related expenses, as authorized by the commissioner.  
887 The provisions of subsections (c) and (d) of this section shall not be  
888 construed to apply to such component. Such component shall be  
889 administered by Connecticut Innovations, Incorporated, in  
890 collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community  
891 Development. For purposes of this section, "Connecticut-based banks"  
892 means banks and out-of-state banks, each as defined in section 36a-2,  
893 having deposit-taking branches in the state.

894 (f) The commissioner, in consultation with Connecticut Innovations,  
895 Incorporated, may establish as part of the Small Business Express  
896 program a component operated in collaboration with Connecticut  
897 Innovations, Incorporated, which may include, but need not be limited  
898 to, financial assistance consistent with the provisions and purposes of  
899 sections 32-23e, 32-23ii and 32-265. Such component may be  
900 administered by Connecticut Innovations, Incorporated, in  
901 collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community  
902 Development.

903 (g) Not later than February 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the  
904 commissioner shall provide a report, in accordance with the provisions  
905 of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General  
906 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and  
907 bonding, appropriations, commerce and labor. Such report shall include  
908 available data on (1) the number of small businesses that received  
909 assistance under the Small Business Express program and the general  
910 categories of such businesses, (2) the amounts and types of assistance  
911 provided, (3) the total number of jobs on the date of application and the  
912 number proposed to be created or retained, (4) the most recent  
913 employment figures of the small businesses receiving assistance, (5) the  
914 default rate of small businesses that received assistance under said  
915 program, and (6) the progress of the lenders participating in said  
916 program in becoming self-sustainable. The contents of such report shall  
917 also be included in the department's annual report.

918 (h) The commissioner may contract with nongovernmental entities,  
919 including, but not limited to, nonprofit organizations, economic and  
920 community development organizations, lending institutions, and  
921 technical assistance providers to carry out the provisions of this section.

922 Sec. 17. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Up to \$75,000 of the amount  
923 appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs, for the fiscal year  
924 ending June 30, 2026, shall be transferred to The University of  
925 Connecticut for the purpose of The School of Public Policy at The  
926 University of Connecticut, with the advice of the advisory committee  
927 described in subsection (b) of this section, conducting the studies  
928 described in subsection (c) of this section. The Commissioner of  
929 Veterans Affairs and The University of Connecticut shall enter into a  
930 memorandum of understanding to effectuate the provisions of this  
931 subsection.

932 (b) The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall convene an advisory  
933 committee to advise The School of Public Policy at The University of  
934 Connecticut in its conduct of the studies described in subsection (c) of  
935 this section by coordinating with said school on the design and scope of

936 such studies. The advisory committee shall consist of: (1) The  
937 commissioner, or the commissioner's designee; (2) the chairpersons of  
938 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
939 cognizance of matters relating to veterans' and military affairs; (3) the  
940 ranking members of the joint standing committee of the General  
941 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to veterans' and  
942 military affairs; (4) a representative of a state-wide organization of  
943 municipal leaders; (5) a representative of an association representing the  
944 interests of assessing officers in the state; and (6) a veteran, as defined in  
945 section 27-103 of the general statutes, who is a representative of a  
946 veterans' advocacy organization in the state.

947 (c) (1) The School of Public Policy at The University of Connecticut,  
948 in consultation with the joint standing committee of the General  
949 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to veterans' and  
950 military affairs, shall conduct a study of the projected impacts on state  
951 and municipal finances relating to the modification of (A) the exemption  
952 amounts set forth in subdivisions (19) to (26), inclusive, of section 12-81  
953 of the general statutes, and (B) any limits on the amount of property  
954 belonging to, or held in trust for, an individual described in any of said  
955 subdivisions in order to be eligible for such an exemption. Such study  
956 shall account for modifications to such exemption amounts in  
957 accordance with the provisions of section 12-62g of the general statutes  
958 and for additional exemptions granted in accordance with the  
959 provisions of section 12-81g of the general statutes. Not later than  
960 January 1, 2027, The School of Public Policy at The University of  
961 Connecticut shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of section  
962 11-4a of the general statutes, a report detailing the results of such study  
963 and any recommendations for legislation to the joint standing  
964 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
965 relating to veterans' and military affairs, finance, revenue and bonding,  
966 appropriations and the budgets of state agencies and planning and  
967 development.

968 (2) The School of Public Policy at The University of Connecticut, in

969 consultation with the manager of the Office of Advocacy and  
970 Assistance, shall conduct a study of the efficacy of municipalities in  
971 providing assistance to veterans under section 27-135 of the general  
972 statutes. Such study shall identify strengths and limitations in the  
973 provision of such assistance and develop solutions for implementation  
974 to address areas needing improvement, broken down by each  
975 municipality. Not later than January 1, 2027, The School of Public Policy  
976 at The University of Connecticut and the manager of the Office of  
977 Advocacy and Assistance shall jointly submit, in accordance with the  
978 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, a report detailing the  
979 results of such study and any recommendations for legislation to the  
980 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
981 matters relating to veterans' and military affairs.

982       Sec. 18. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) As used in this section, "veterans  
983 benefits matter" means the preparation, presentation or prosecution of  
984 any claim affecting any individual who has filed or expressed an intent  
985 to file a claim for any benefit, program, service, commodity, function or  
986 status to which such individual may be entitled, as determined under  
987 the laws and regulations administered by the United States Department  
988 of Veterans Affairs or the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs  
989 relating to veterans, their dependents, their survivors and any other  
990 eligible recipients for any such benefit, program, service, commodity,  
991 function or status; and "preparation" includes, but is not limited to,  
992 consulting with or giving advice to a claimant or potential claimant in  
993 contemplation of filing any such claim, gathering evidence in support  
994 of such a claim or completing United States Department of Veterans  
995 Affairs forms for submission to the United States Department of  
996 Veterans Affairs.

997       (b) The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the  
998 Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, the Attorney General  
999 and the Commissioner of Consumer Protection, shall study the impact  
1000 on Connecticut residents of (1) unaccredited commercial entities or  
1001 agents that provide advice, guidance or assistance with veterans

1002 benefits matters, and (2) the fee structures of such entities or agents. Not  
 1003 later than February 1, 2026, the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall  
 1004 submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general  
 1005 statutes, a report detailing the findings of such study, including, but not  
 1006 limited to, whether predatory practices exist in the provision of advice,  
 1007 guidance or assistance with veterans benefits matters and whether  
 1008 Connecticut residents have been harmed by any such predatory  
 1009 practices, and any recommendations for legislation to afford protections  
 1010 to Connecticut residents from such predatory practices, to the Governor  
 1011 and to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
 1012 cognizance of matters relating to veterans' and military affairs."

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025</i>	17b-28i(a)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025</i>	17b-104(a)
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025</i>	17b-191(c)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025</i>	17b-256f
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025</i>	17b-261(a)
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025</i>	17b-342(l)



Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025</i>	17b-801(a)
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-26
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-77(d) to (g)
Sec. 11	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-99(d) to (g)
Sec. 12	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-105(e) to (h)
Sec. 13	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-143(h) and (i)
Sec. 14	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	51-297
Sec. 15	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	27-1021(b)
Sec. 16	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	32-7g
Sec. 17	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 18	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section