
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6439

AN ACT CONCERNING A FEE WAIVER AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR CERTAIN VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD.

SUMMARY

This bill expands the higher education tuition waiver program to cover certain extension fees for eligible National Guard members and veterans with wartime service (see BACKGROUND).

It requires the regional community-technical colleges, the Connecticut State University System, and UConn to waive fees for educational extension programs, including for courses taken during summer and winter school sessions or intersessions. Current law requires these institutions to waive eligible veterans' and National Guard members' tuition, which does not include these fees.

The bill makes various conforming changes, including incorporating these extension fee waivers into the calculation of waiver amounts that the state must annually reimburse to these institutions' operating funds through an appropriation. Under current law, the reimbursement amount is based only on tuition waivers.

The bill also establishes a course enrollment fee waiver for eligible National Guard members and veterans with wartime service who attend Charter Oak State College, with generally the same eligibility requirements as the tuition waiver program. Charter Oak State College no longer charges course enrollment fees and instead charges tuition per credit, among other fees. (It is unclear whether the bill's course enrollment fee waiver requirement would extend to tuition and these other fees.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

BACKGROUND

Veterans' Service in Time of War

By law, to be eligible for state benefits (including tuition waivers) that require service in a time of war, a veteran must generally have served at least 90 cumulative days during a statutorily defined period of war, which are described in the table below. A veteran who served fewer days may qualify 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 shows post-1940 periods of war and service conditions for purposes of veterans' benefits (CGS § 27-103(a)(4)).

Table: Post-1940 "Periods of War"

<i>Operation</i>	<i>Covered Period</i>	<i>Service Condition</i>
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).

Related Bill

SB 376, reported favorably by the Veterans' and Military Affairs

Committee, eliminates service in time of war as an eligibility requirement for, among other things, veterans' tuition waivers.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/11/2025)