



General Assembly

**Amendment**

January Session, 2025

LCO No. 7763



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8 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  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] all United States Department of  
12 Veterans Affairs-administered non-service-connected pension benefits,

13 Aid and Attendance pension benefits and Housebound pension benefits  
14 that are granted to a veteran or the surviving spouse of such veteran  
15 when determining income eligibility for the state's Medicare savings,  
16 [medical assistance] HUSKY A and HUSKY D and energy assistance  
17 programs administered under section 17b-2. As used in this subsection,  
18 "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103, and  
19 "HUSKY A" and "HUSKY D" have the same meanings as provided in  
20 section 17b-290.

21 Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 17b-104 of the general statutes is  
22 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
23 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

24 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall administer the program  
25 of state supplementation to the Supplemental Security Income Program  
26 provided for by the Social Security Act and state law. The commissioner  
27 may delegate any powers and authority to any deputy, assistant,  
28 investigator or supervisor, who shall have, within the scope of the  
29 power and authority so delegated, all of the power and authority of the  
30 Commissioner of Social Services. The standard of need for the  
31 temporary family assistance program shall be fifty-five per cent of the  
32 federal poverty level. The commissioner shall make a reinvestigation, at  
33 least every twelve months, of all cases receiving aid from the state,  
34 except that such reinvestigation may be conducted every twenty-four  
35 months for recipients of assistance to the elderly or disabled with stable  
36 circumstances, and shall maintain all case records of the several  
37 programs administered by the Department of Social Services so that  
38 such records show, at all times, full information with respect to  
39 eligibility of the applicant or recipient. In the determination of need  
40 under any public assistance program, such income or earnings shall be  
41 disregarded as federal law requires, and such income or earnings may  
42 be disregarded as federal law permits. In determining eligibility, the  
43 commissioner shall disregard from income (1) all United States  
44 Department of Veterans Affairs-administered non-service-connected  
45 pension benefits, Aid and Attendance pension benefits and

46 Housebound pension benefits that are granted to a veteran, as defined  
47 [under] in section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran, and  
48 (2) any tax refund or advance payment with respect to a refundable  
49 credit to the same extent such refund or advance payment would be  
50 disregarded under 26 USC 6409 in any federal program or state or local  
51 program financed in whole or in part with federal funds. The  
52 commissioner shall encourage and promulgate such incentive earning  
53 programs as are permitted by federal law and regulations.

54 Sec. 4. Subsection (c) of section 17b-191 of the general statutes is  
55 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
56 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

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

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

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

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

110       Sec. 6. Subsection (a) of section 17b-261 of the general statutes is  
111       repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*

112 2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025):

113 (a) (1) Medical assistance shall be provided for any otherwise eligible  
114 person ~~[(1)]~~ (A) whose income, including any available support from  
115 legally liable relatives and the income of the person's spouse or  
116 dependent child, is not more than one hundred fifty-nine per cent,  
117 pending approval of a federal waiver applied for pursuant to subsection  
118 (e) of this section, of the benefit amount paid to a person with no income  
119 under the temporary family assistance program, and ~~[(2)]~~ (B) if such  
120 person is an institutionalized individual as defined in Section 1917 of  
121 the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(h)(3), and has not made an  
122 assignment or transfer or other disposition of property for less than fair  
123 market value for the purpose of establishing eligibility for benefits or  
124 assistance under this section. Any such disposition shall be treated in  
125 accordance with Section 1917(c) of the Social Security Act, 42 USC  
126 1396p(c). Any disposition of property made on behalf of an applicant or  
127 recipient or the spouse of an applicant or recipient by a guardian,  
128 conservator, person authorized to make such disposition pursuant to a  
129 power of attorney or other person so authorized by law shall be  
130 attributed to such applicant, recipient or spouse. A disposition of  
131 property ordered by a court shall be evaluated in accordance with the  
132 standards applied to any other such disposition for the purpose of  
133 determining eligibility.

134 (2) The commissioner shall establish the standards for eligibility for  
135 medical assistance at one hundred fifty-nine per cent of the benefit  
136 amount paid to a household of equal size with no income under the  
137 temporary family assistance program. In determining eligibility, the  
138 commissioner shall ~~[not consider as]~~ disregard from income Aid and  
139 Attendance pension benefits that are granted to a veteran, as defined in  
140 section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran. Except as  
141 provided in section 17b-277 and section 17b-292, the medical assistance  
142 program shall provide coverage to persons under the age of nineteen  
143 with household income up to one hundred ninety-six per cent of the  
144 federal poverty level without an asset limit and to persons under the age

145 of nineteen, who qualify for coverage under Section 1931 of the Social  
146 Security Act, with household income not exceeding one hundred  
147 ninety-six per cent of the federal poverty level without an asset limit,  
148 and their parents and needy caretaker relatives, who qualify for  
149 coverage under Section 1931 of the Social Security Act, with household  
150 income not exceeding one hundred thirty-three per cent of the federal  
151 poverty level without an asset limit. Such levels shall be based on the  
152 regional differences in such benefit amount, if applicable, unless such  
153 levels based on regional differences are not in conformance with federal  
154 law. Any income in excess of the applicable amounts shall be applied as  
155 may be required by said federal law, and assistance shall be granted for  
156 the balance of the cost of authorized medical assistance.

157 (3) The Commissioner of Social Services shall provide applicants for  
158 assistance under this section, at the time of application, with a written  
159 statement advising them of (A) the effect of an assignment or transfer or  
160 other disposition of property on eligibility for benefits or assistance, (B)  
161 the effect that having income that exceeds the limits prescribed in this  
162 subsection will have with respect to program eligibility, and (C) the  
163 availability of, and eligibility for, services provided by the Connecticut  
164 Home Visiting System, established pursuant to section 17b-751b. For  
165 coverage dates on or after January 1, 2014, the department shall use the  
166 modified adjusted gross income financial eligibility rules set forth in  
167 Section 1902(e)(14) of the Social Security Act and the implementing  
168 regulations to determine eligibility for HUSKY A, HUSKY B and  
169 HUSKY D applicants, as defined in section 17b-290. Persons who are  
170 determined ineligible for assistance pursuant to this section shall be  
171 provided a written statement notifying such persons of their ineligibility  
172 and advising such persons of their potential eligibility for one of the  
173 other insurance affordability programs as defined in 42 CFR 435.4.

174 Sec. 7. Subsection (l) of section 17b-342 of the general statutes is  
175 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
176 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

177 (l) In determining eligibility for the program described in this section,

178 the commissioner shall [not consider as] disregard from income (1) all  
179 United States Department of Veterans Affairs-administered non-  
180 service-connected pension benefits, Aid and Attendance pension  
181 benefits and Housebound pension benefits that are granted to a veteran,  
182 as defined in section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran,  
183 and (2) any tax refund or advance payment with respect to a refundable  
184 credit to the same extent such refund or advance payment would be  
185 disregarded under 26 USC 6409 in any federal program or state or local  
186 program financed in whole or in part with federal funds.

187 Sec. 8. Subsection (a) of section 17b-801 of the general statutes is  
188 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
189 *2025, and applicable to applications filed on or after July 1, 2025*):

190 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall administer a state-  
191 appropriated fuel assistance program to provide, within available  
192 appropriations, fuel assistance to elderly and disabled persons whose  
193 household gross income is above the income eligibility guidelines for  
194 the Connecticut energy assistance program but does not exceed two  
195 hundred per cent of federal poverty guidelines. The income eligibility  
196 guidelines for the state-appropriated fuel assistance program shall be  
197 determined, annually, by the Commissioner of Social Services, in  
198 conjunction with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management.  
199 In determining eligibility, the commissioner shall [not consider as  
200 income] disregard from income all United States Department of  
201 Veterans Affairs-administered non-service-connected pension benefits,  
202 Aid and Attendance pension benefits and Housebound pension benefits  
203 that are granted to a veteran, as defined under section 27-103, or the  
204 surviving spouse of such veteran. The commissioner may adopt  
205 regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to  
206 implement the provisions of this subsection.

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

209 (a) For the purposes of this section, sections 10a-77, as amended by

210 this act, 10a-99, as amended by this act, and 10a-105, as amended by this  
211 act, and this part: (1) A "full-time student" means a student who has been  
212 registered and who has been accepted for matriculation at a constituent  
213 unit of the state system of higher education in a course of study leading  
214 to an associate, bachelor or advanced degree or whose course of  
215 instruction or credit hour load indicates pursuit toward a degree; (2)  
216 "tuition" means a direct charge for institutional programs, which is  
217 clearly delineated from any other fees.

218 (b) In order to defray part of the cost of the higher education  
219 institutional programs at the constituent units of the state system of  
220 higher education, tuition shall be charged as provided in [said] sections  
221 10a-77, as amended by this act, 10a-99, as amended by this act, and 10a-  
222 105, as amended by this act, for each full-time student or shall be  
223 prorated in the case of a student carrying less than seventy-five per cent  
224 of the credit hours defined as a full-time load by the institution. Any  
225 person enrolled in and paying extension fees for a course in an  
226 educational extension program, [or] including for a course in a summer  
227 or winter school session or intersession, shall not be charged tuition for  
228 such course.

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

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

237 (d) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition at any of  
238 the regional community-technical colleges (1) for any dependent child  
239 of a person whom the armed forces of the United States has declared to  
240 be missing in action or to have been a prisoner of war while serving in  
241 such armed forces after January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted



242 for admission to such institution and is a resident of the state at the time  
243 such child is accepted for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the  
244 provisions of subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in  
245 section 27-103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in  
246 section 27-103, except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in  
247 time of war" shall not include time spent in attendance at a military  
248 service academy, which veteran has been accepted for admission to such  
249 institution and is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is  
250 accepted for admission to such institution. Said board shall also waive  
251 for any such veteran the payment of any extension fees under section  
252 10a-26, as amended by this act, for educational extension programs, (3)  
253 for any resident of the state sixty-two years of age or older, provided, at  
254 the end of the regular registration period, there are enrolled in the  
255 course a sufficient number of students other than those residents eligible  
256 for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to offer the course in which  
257 such resident intends to enroll and there is space available in such  
258 course after accommodating all such students, (4) for any student  
259 attending the Connecticut State Police Academy who is enrolled in a law  
260 enforcement program at said academy offered in coordination with a  
261 regional community-technical college which accredits courses taken in  
262 such program, (5) for any active member of the Connecticut Army or  
263 Air National Guard who (A) has been certified by the Adjutant General  
264 or such Adjutant General's designee as a member in good standing of  
265 the guard, and (B) is enrolled or accepted for admission to such  
266 institution on a full-time or part-time basis in an undergraduate degree-  
267 granting program. Said board shall also waive for any such member the  
268 payment of any extension fees under section 10a-26, as amended by this  
269 act, for educational extension programs, (6) for any dependent child of  
270 a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or  
271 auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or  
272 member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal employee, or (D)  
273 state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (7)  
274 for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or surviving  
275 spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a resident of this state, (8)  
276 for any dependent child of a resident of the state who was killed in a

277 multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and  
278 Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, and (9) for any resident of the state  
279 who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a person who was  
280 killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed  
281 forces of the United States on or after September 11, 2001, and who was  
282 a resident of this state. If any person who receives a tuition waiver in  
283 accordance with the provisions of this subsection also receives  
284 educational reimbursement from an employer, such waiver shall be  
285 reduced by the amount of such educational reimbursement. Veterans  
286 and members of the National Guard described in subdivision (5) of this  
287 subsection shall be given the same status as students not receiving  
288 tuition waivers in registering for courses at regional community-  
289 technical colleges. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 10a-30, as  
290 used in this subsection, "domiciled in this state" includes domicile for  
291 less than one year.

292 (e) (1) If any veteran described in subsection (d) of this section has  
293 applied for federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Veterans  
294 Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the board of trustees shall waive the  
295 payment of tuition and extension fees at any of the regional community-  
296 technical colleges for such veteran in accordance with subdivision (2) of  
297 this subsection. If any such veteran certifies to said board that such  
298 veteran's application for such federal educational assistance has been  
299 denied or withdrawn, said board of trustees shall waive the payment of  
300 tuition and extension fees in accordance with subsection (d) of this  
301 section.

302 (2) (A) For purposes of this subdivision, "veteran tuition benefit"  
303 means the portion of federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
304 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 to be paid to a regional  
305 community-technical college on behalf of a veteran that represents  
306 payment for tuition and extension fees. Such portion shall be calculated  
307 by multiplying (i) the total amount of such federal educational  
308 assistance to be paid to a regional community-technical college on  
309 behalf of such veteran by (ii) an amount obtained by dividing (I) the sum

310 of the actual tuition and extension fees charged by such college to such  
311 veteran by (II) the sum of the actual tuition, extension fees and other fees  
312 charged by such college to such veteran.

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

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

334 (g) The Regional Community-Technical Colleges Operating Fund  
335 shall be reimbursed for the amount by which the tuition and extension  
336 fee waivers granted under subsection (d) of this section exceed five per  
337 cent of tuition and extension fee revenue through an annual state  
338 appropriation. The board of trustees shall request such an appropriation  
339 and [said] such appropriation shall be based upon an estimate of tuition  
340 and extension fee revenue loss using tuition and extension fee rates in  
341 effect for the fiscal year in which such appropriation will apply.

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

345 (d) Said board shall waive the payment of tuition fees for  
346 undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the Connecticut State  
347 University System (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the  
348 armed forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or  
349 to have been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after  
350 January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to such  
351 institution and is a resident of the state at the time such child is accepted  
352 for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the provisions of  
353 subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-  
354 103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,  
355 except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall  
356 not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy,  
357 which veteran has been accepted for admission to such institution and  
358 is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for  
359 admission to such institution. Said board shall also waive for any such  
360 veteran the payment of any extension fees under section 10a-26, as  
361 amended by this act, for educational extension programs, (3) for any  
362 resident of the state sixty-two years of age or older who has been  
363 accepted for admission to such institution, provided (A) such resident  
364 is enrolled in a degree-granting program, or (B) at the end of the regular  
365 registration period, there are enrolled in the course a sufficient number  
366 of students other than those residents eligible for waivers pursuant to  
367 this subdivision to offer the course in which such resident intends to  
368 enroll and there is space available in such course after accommodating  
369 all such students, (4) for any student attending the Connecticut Police  
370 Academy who is enrolled in a law enforcement program at said  
371 academy offered in coordination with the university which accredits  
372 courses taken in such program, (5) for any active member of the  
373 Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A) has been certified by  
374 the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's designee as a member  
375 in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled or accepted for

376 admission to such institution on a full-time or part-time basis in an  
377 undergraduate or graduate degree-granting program. Said board shall  
378 also waive for any such member the payment of any extension fees  
379 under section 10a-26, as amended by this act, for educational extension  
380 programs, (6) for any dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined  
381 in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B)  
382 firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire  
383 company, (C) municipal employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in  
384 section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (7) for any resident of this state  
385 who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist  
386 victim who was a resident of the state, (8) for any dependent child of a  
387 resident of the state who was killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the  
388 intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005,  
389 and (9) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or  
390 surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action while performing  
391 active military duty with the armed forces of the United States on or  
392 after September 11, 2001, and who was a resident of this state. If any  
393 person who receives a tuition waiver in accordance with the provisions  
394 of this subsection also receives educational reimbursement from an  
395 employer, such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such  
396 educational reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National  
397 Guard described in subdivision (5) of this subsection shall be given the  
398 same status as students not receiving tuition waivers in registering for  
399 courses at Connecticut state universities. Notwithstanding the  
400 provisions of section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in  
401 this state" includes domicile for less than one year.

402 (e) (1) If any veteran described in subsection (d) of this section has  
403 applied for federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Veterans  
404 Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the board of trustees shall waive the  
405 payment of tuition and extension fees at the Connecticut State  
406 University System for such veteran in accordance with subdivision (2)  
407 of this subsection. If any such veteran certifies to said board that such  
408 veteran's application for such federal educational assistance has been  
409 denied or withdrawn, said board of trustees shall waive the payment of

410 tuition and extension fees in accordance with subsection (d) of this  
411 section.

412 (2) (A) For purposes of this subdivision, "veteran tuition benefit"  
413 means the portion of federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
414 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 to be paid to the  
415 Connecticut State University System on behalf of a veteran that  
416 represents payment for tuition and extension fees. Such portion shall be  
417 calculated by multiplying (i) the total amount of such federal  
418 educational assistance to be paid to the Connecticut State University  
419 System on behalf of such veteran by (ii) an amount obtained by dividing  
420 (I) the sum of the actual tuition and extension fees charged by the  
421 Connecticut State University System to such veteran by (II) the sum of  
422 the actual tuition, extension fees and other fees charged by the  
423 Connecticut State University System to such veteran.

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

427 (f) Said board shall set aside from its anticipated tuition revenue, an  
428 amount not less than that required by the board of governors' tuition  
429 policy established under subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 10a-  
430 6. Such funds shall be used to provide tuition waivers, tuition  
431 remissions, grants for educational expenses and student employment  
432 for any undergraduate or graduate student who is enrolled as a full or  
433 part-time matriculated student in a degree-granting program, or  
434 enrolled in a precollege remedial program, and who demonstrates  
435 substantial financial need. Said board may also set aside from its  
436 anticipated tuition revenue an additional amount equal to one per cent  
437 of [said] such tuition revenue for financial assistance for students who  
438 would not otherwise be eligible for financial assistance but who do have  
439 a financial need as determined by the university in accordance with this  
440 subsection. In determining such financial need, the university shall  
441 exclude the value of equity in the principal residence of the student's  
442 parents or legal guardians, or in the student's principal residence if the

443 student is not considered to be a dependent of his parents or legal  
444 guardians and shall assess the earnings of a dependent student at the  
445 rate of thirty per cent.

446 (g) The Connecticut State University System Operating Fund shall be  
447 reimbursed for the amount by which the tuition and extension fee  
448 waivers granted under subsection (d) of this section exceed two and  
449 one-half per cent of tuition and extension fee revenue through an annual  
450 state appropriation. The board of trustees shall request such an  
451 appropriation and [said] such appropriation shall be based upon an  
452 estimate of tuition and extension fee revenue loss using tuition and  
453 extension fee rates in effect for the fiscal year in which such  
454 appropriation will apply.

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

458 (e) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition fees for  
459 any undergraduate or graduate degree program at The University of  
460 Connecticut (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the armed  
461 forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or to have  
462 been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after January  
463 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to The University  
464 of Connecticut and is a resident of the state at the time such child is  
465 accepted for admission to said institution, (2) subject to the provisions  
466 of subsection (f) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-  
467 103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,  
468 except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall  
469 not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy,  
470 which veteran has been accepted for admission to said institution and is  
471 domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for admission  
472 to said institution. Said board shall also waive for any such veteran the  
473 payment of any extension fees under section 10a-26, as amended by this  
474 act, for educational extension programs, (3) for any resident of the state  
475 sixty-two years of age or older who has been accepted for admission to

476 said institution, provided (A) such resident is enrolled in a degree-  
477 granting program, or (B) at the end of the regular registration period,  
478 there are enrolled in the course a sufficient number of students other  
479 than those residents eligible for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to  
480 offer the course in which such resident intends to enroll and there is  
481 space available in such course after accommodating all such students,  
482 (4) for any active member of the Connecticut Army or Air National  
483 Guard who (A) has been certified by the Adjutant General or such  
484 Adjutant General's designee as a member in good standing of the guard,  
485 and (B) is enrolled or accepted for admission to said institution on a full-  
486 time or part-time basis in an undergraduate or graduate degree-  
487 granting program. Said board shall also waive for any such member the  
488 payment of any extension fees under section 10a-26, as amended by this  
489 act, for educational extension programs, (5) for any dependent child of  
490 a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or  
491 auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or  
492 member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal employee, or (D)  
493 state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (6)  
494 for any resident of the state who is the dependent child or surviving  
495 spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a resident of the state, (7)  
496 for any dependent child of a resident of the state who was killed in a  
497 multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and  
498 Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, and (8) for any resident of the state  
499 who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a person who was  
500 killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed  
501 forces of the United States on or after September 11, 2001, and who was  
502 a resident of this state. If any person who receives a tuition waiver in  
503 accordance with the provisions of this subsection also receives  
504 educational reimbursement from an employer, such waiver shall be  
505 reduced by the amount of such educational reimbursement. Veterans  
506 and members of the National Guard described in subdivision (4) of this  
507 subsection shall be given the same status as students not receiving  
508 tuition waivers in registering for courses at The University of  
509 Connecticut. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 10a-30, as used  
510 in this subsection, "domiciled in this state" includes domicile for less



511 than one year.

512 (f) (1) If any veteran described in subsection (e) of this section has  
513 applied for federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Veterans  
514 Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the board of trustees shall waive the  
515 payment of tuition and extension fees at The University of Connecticut  
516 for such veteran in accordance with subdivision (2) of this subsection. If  
517 any such veteran certifies to said board that such veteran's application  
518 for such federal educational assistance has been denied or withdrawn,  
519 said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition and extension  
520 fees in accordance with subsection (d) of this section.

521 (2) (A) For purposes of this subdivision, "veteran tuition benefit"  
522 means the portion of federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
523 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 to be paid to The  
524 University of Connecticut on behalf of a veteran that represents  
525 payment for tuition and extension fees. Such portion shall be calculated  
526 by multiplying (i) the total amount of such federal educational  
527 assistance to be paid to The University of Connecticut on behalf of such  
528 veteran by (ii) an amount obtained by dividing (I) the sum of the actual  
529 tuition and extension fees charged by The University of Connecticut to  
530 such veteran by (II) the sum of the actual tuition, extension fees and  
531 other fees charged by The University of Connecticut to such veteran.

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

535 (g) Said board of trustees shall set aside from its anticipated tuition  
536 revenue, an amount not less than that required by the board of  
537 governors' tuition policy established under subdivision (3) of subsection  
538 (a) of section 10a-6. Such funds shall be used to provide tuition waivers,  
539 tuition remissions, grants for educational expenses and student  
540 employment for any undergraduate, graduate or professional student  
541 who is enrolled as a full or part-time matriculated student in a degree-  
542 granting program, or enrolled in a precollege remedial program, and

543 who demonstrates substantial financial need. Said board may also set  
544 aside from its anticipated tuition revenue an additional amount equal to  
545 one per cent of [said] such tuition revenue for financial assistance for  
546 students who would not otherwise be eligible for financial assistance  
547 but who do have a financial need as determined by the university in  
548 accordance with this subsection. In determining such financial need, the  
549 university shall exclude the value of equity in the principal residence of  
550 the student's parents or legal guardians, or in the student's principal  
551 residence if the student is not considered to be a dependent of his  
552 parents or legal guardians and shall assess the earnings of a dependent  
553 student at the rate of thirty per cent.

554 (h) The University of Connecticut Operating Fund shall be  
555 reimbursed for the amount by which tuition and extension fee waivers  
556 granted under subsection (e) of this section exceed two and one-half per  
557 cent of tuition and extension fee revenue through an annual state  
558 appropriation. The board of trustees shall request such an appropriation  
559 and [said] such appropriation shall be based upon an estimate of tuition  
560 and extension fee revenue loss using tuition and extension fee rates in  
561 effect for the fiscal year in which such appropriation will apply.

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

564 (NEW) (h) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall waive  
565 the payment of course enrollment fees at Charter Oak State College (1)  
566 subject to the provisions of subsection (i) of this section, for any veteran,  
567 as defined in section 27-103, who performed service in time of war, as  
568 defined in section 27-103, except that for purposes of this subsection,  
569 "service in time of war" shall not include time spent in attendance at a  
570 military service academy, which veteran has been accepted for  
571 admission to Charter Oak State College and is domiciled in this state at  
572 the time such veteran is accepted for admission to said institution, and  
573 (2) for any active member of the Connecticut Army or Air National  
574 Guard who (A) has been certified by the Adjutant General or such  
575 Adjutant General's designee as a member in good standing of the guard,

576 and (B) is enrolled or accepted for admission to Charter Oak State  
577 College on a full-time or part-time basis in a degree-granting program.  
578 If any such veteran or member of the National Guard who receives a  
579 course enrollment fee waiver in accordance with the provisions of this  
580 subsection also receives educational reimbursement from an employer,  
581 such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such educational  
582 reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National Guard  
583 described in this subsection shall be given the same status as students  
584 not receiving course enrollment fee waivers in registering for courses at  
585 Charter Oak State College. Notwithstanding the provisions of section  
586 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in this state" includes  
587 domicile for less than one year.

588 (NEW) (i) (1) If any veteran described in subsection (h) of this section  
589 has applied for federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
590 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the Board of Regents for  
591 Higher Education shall waive the payment of course enrollment fees at  
592 Charter Oak State College for such veteran in accordance with  
593 subdivision (2) of this subsection. If any such veteran certifies to said  
594 board of regents that such veteran's application for such federal  
595 educational assistance has been denied or withdrawn, said board of  
596 regents shall waive the payment of course enrollment fees in accordance  
597 with subsection (h) of this section.

598 (2) (A) For purposes of this subdivision, "veteran tuition benefit"  
599 means the portion of federal educational assistance under the Post-9/11  
600 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 to be paid to Charter Oak  
601 State College on behalf of a veteran that represents payment for course  
602 enrollment fees. Such portion shall be calculated by multiplying (i) the  
603 total amount of such federal educational assistance to be paid to Charter  
604 Oak State College on behalf of such veteran by (ii) an amount obtained  
605 by dividing (I) the actual course enrollment fees charged by Charter Oak  
606 State College to such veteran by (II) the sum of the actual course  
607 enrollment fees and other fees charged by Charter Oak State College to  
608 such veteran.

609 (B) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall waive the  
610 payment of course enrollment fees in excess of the veteran tuition  
611 benefit at Charter Oak State College for such veteran.

612 Sec. 14. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Annually on the eleventh day  
613 of November, any person who is a veteran, as defined in section 27-103  
614 of the general statutes, shall be exempt from payment of the lawful  
615 charge for state-owned or state-controlled bus public transportation  
616 service, provided such person presents to the fare inspector, as defined  
617 in section 13b-2 of the general statutes, or the driver of such bus, as  
618 applicable, a motor vehicle operator's license or identity card indicating  
619 such person's status as a veteran, as provided in subsection (e) of section  
620 14-36h of the general statutes.

621 (b) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Commissioner of  
622 Transportation shall (1) study the feasibility of annually exempting  
623 veterans, by January 1, 2030, from payment of any charge, fee or fare  
624 associated with riding all modes of public transportation in this state on  
625 the eleventh day of November, and (2) if feasible, develop a plan to  
626 implement such an exemption. Not later than February 1, 2026, the  
627 commissioner shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of section  
628 11-4a of the general statutes, a report detailing the results of such study  
629 and recommendations for legislation to carry out such plan to the joint  
630 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
631 matters relating to transportation and veterans' affairs.

632 Sec. 15. Section 51-297 of the general statutes, as amended by section  
633 201 of public act 23-204, is repealed and the following is substituted in  
634 lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

635 (a) A public defender, assistant public defender or deputy assistant  
636 public defender shall make such investigation of the financial status of  
637 each person he has been appointed to represent or who has requested  
638 representation based on indigency, as he deems necessary. He shall  
639 cause the person to complete a written statement under oath or  
640 affirmation setting forth his liabilities and assets, income and sources

641 thereof, and such other information which the commission shall  
642 designate and require on forms furnished for such purpose.

643 (b) Any person who intentionally falsifies a written statement in  
644 order to obtain appointment of a public defender, assistant public  
645 defender or deputy assistant public defender shall be guilty of a class A  
646 misdemeanor.

647 (c) If a public defender, assistant public defender or deputy assistant  
648 public defender is appointed to provide assistance to any person and he  
649 subsequently determines that the person is ineligible for assistance, the  
650 public defender, assistant public defender or deputy assistant public  
651 defender shall promptly inform the person in writing and make a  
652 motion to withdraw his appearance if filed, or his appointment if made  
653 by the court, as soon as it is practical to do so without prejudice to the  
654 case, giving the defendant a reasonable time to secure private counsel.  
655 If the withdrawal is granted by the court, the person shall reimburse the  
656 commission for any assistance which has been provided for which the  
657 person is ineligible.

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

661 (e) The Chief Public Defender or anyone serving under him may  
662 institute an investigation into the financial status of each defendant at  
663 such times as the circumstances shall warrant. In connection therewith,  
664 he shall have the authority to require a defendant or the parents,  
665 guardians or other persons responsible for the support of a minor  
666 defendant, child or youth, or those persons holding property in trust or  
667 otherwise for a defendant, child or youth, to execute and deliver such  
668 written authorizations as may be necessary to provide the Chief Public  
669 Defender, or anyone serving under him, with access to records of public  
670 or private sources, otherwise confidential, or any other information,  
671 which may be relevant to the making of a decision as to eligibility under  
672 this chapter. The Chief Public Defender, the Deputy Chief Public

673 Defender, and each public defender, assistant public defender and  
674 deputy assistant public defender or designee, are authorized to obtain  
675 information from any office of the state or any subdivision or agency  
676 thereof on request and without payment of any fees.

677 (f) (1) As used in this chapter, "indigent defendant" means (A) a  
678 person who is formally charged with the commission of a crime  
679 punishable by imprisonment and who does not have the financial ability  
680 at the time of his request for representation to secure competent legal  
681 representation and to provide other necessary expenses of legal  
682 representation; (B) a child who has a right to counsel under the  
683 provisions of subsection (a) of section 46b-135 and who does not have  
684 the financial ability at the time of his request for representation to secure  
685 competent legal representation and to provide other necessary expenses  
686 of legal representation; or (C) any person who has a right to counsel  
687 under section 46b-136 and who does not have the financial ability at the  
688 time of his request for representation to secure competent legal  
689 representation and to provide other necessary expenses of legal  
690 representation.

691 (2) An assessment determining whether a person has the financial  
692 ability to secure competent legal representation and to provide other  
693 necessary expenses of legal representation or qualifies as an indigent  
694 defendant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be based  
695 upon guidelines established by the commission. The commission shall  
696 annually establish such guidelines providing that a person whose  
697 income, which shall exclude all service-connected disability benefits  
698 administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and  
699 otherwise be calculated as described in such guidelines, is two hundred  
700 fifty per cent or less of the federal poverty level may qualify as an  
701 indigent defendant. The commission shall make such guidelines  
702 available to the public on the Division of Public Defender Service's  
703 Internet web site.

704 (g) If the Chief Public Defender or anyone serving under the Chief  
705 Public Defender determines that an individual is not eligible to receive

706 the services of a public defender under this chapter, the individual may  
707 appeal the decision to the court before which the individual's case is  
708 pending.

709 Sec. 16. Subsection (b) of section 27-102l of the general statutes is  
710 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
711 *2025*):

712 (b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a manager to administer an  
713 Office of Advocacy and Assistance for the aid and benefit of veterans  
714 and their spouses, eligible dependents and family members. The office  
715 shall have a staff of not less than [ten] nineteen men and women,  
716 including [eight] not less than fourteen veterans' service officers, and  
717 not less than three clerical personnel. The manager and veterans' service  
718 officers shall be veterans, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103,  
719 or veterans who were awarded the armed forces expeditionary medal  
720 for service by the armed forces.

721 (2) (A) The manager shall develop a training module on assisting and  
722 serving women veterans with regard to state or federal services or  
723 benefits and identifying and advising such veterans of community or  
724 nonprofit programs focused on assisting and serving such veterans. The  
725 manager shall hold and provide instruction for an annual training  
726 session, in accordance with such module, to each veterans' service  
727 officer and any member of a municipal veterans advisory committee,  
728 director of municipal veterans services or municipal veterans  
729 representative, as described in subsection (c) of section 27-135, or  
730 representative from an Operation Academic Support for Incoming  
731 Service Members center at a public institution of higher education in this  
732 state.

733 (B) At least one of the veterans' service officers shall be a woman  
734 having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans, who  
735 shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective upon  
736 the next opening of a veterans' service officer position occurring on or  
737 after July 1, 2010, at least two of the veterans' service officers shall be

738 individuals having bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish, within  
739 existing authorized positions. At least two of the veterans' service  
740 officers shall, in addition to carrying out the duties under this section,  
741 be responsible for overseeing and supporting municipalities'  
742 compliance with the provisions of section 27-135. Each veterans' service  
743 officer shall (i) successfully complete a course in veterans' benefits not  
744 later than one year after commencement of employment, (ii) attend the  
745 training session described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, and  
746 (iii) be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the state.

747 (3) The office staff shall, at least twice annually, conduct a training  
748 course for any member of a municipal veterans advisory committee,  
749 director of municipal veterans services or municipal veterans  
750 representative. The office staff shall include in such training course a  
751 summary of state and federal services and benefits, the requirements  
752 under section 27-135, and any assistance the office staff may provide to  
753 any such member, director or representative related to such  
754 requirements.

755 (4) (A) The office shall develop a written outreach plan identifying (i)  
756 strategies for conducting outreach to veterans and their spouses, eligible  
757 dependents and family members for purposes of providing assistance  
758 in claims for veterans' services or benefits, and (ii) to the extent possible,  
759 specific events and other opportunities to provide such assistance that  
760 are sponsored by the office or in which the office is participating. The  
761 office shall update such written outreach plan as necessary to improve  
762 the efficacy of its outreach efforts.

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

769 (C) The office shall utilize the notifications received from the



770 administrator of each nursing home and assisted living facility in the  
771 state, pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of this section, to  
772 develop an annual schedule for each veterans' service officer to visit  
773 nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The office shall compile any  
774 information collected as a result of such visits and provide quarterly  
775 reports on such information to the Board of Trustees for the Department  
776 of Veterans Affairs.

777 (D) The office shall provide quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees  
778 for the Department of Veterans Affairs on (i) concerns raised by veterans  
779 or their spouses, eligible dependents or family members, which  
780 concerns shall be summarized by type, frequency and resolution, (ii)  
781 petitions filed by veterans or their spouses, eligible dependents or  
782 family members received by the commissioner under section 27-102l(d)-  
783 54 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies for the four preceding  
784 months, and (iii) copies of any such petitions.

785 Sec. 17. Section 32-7g of the general statutes is repealed and the  
786 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

787 (a) There is established within the Department of Economic and  
788 Community Development the Small Business Express program. Said  
789 program shall provide small businesses with various forms of financial  
790 assistance. A small business eligible for assistance through said program  
791 shall (1) employ not more than one hundred employees, (2) have  
792 operations in Connecticut, and (3) be in good standing with the payment  
793 of all state and local taxes and with all state agencies. It shall be the goal  
794 of the Department of Economic and Community Development that, on  
795 or before July 1, 2026, the Small Business Express program be self-  
796 funded and that the default rate of small businesses that receive  
797 assistance under said program be not more than twenty per cent.

798 (b) The Small Business Express program shall consist of various  
799 components, including (1) a revolving loan fund, as described in  
800 subsection (c) of this section, to support small business growth, (2) at  
801 least one minority business revolving loan fund, as described in

802 subsection (d) of this section, to support the growth of minority-owned  
803 businesses, (3) a disabled veteran business revolving loan fund, as  
804 described in subsection (e) of this section, to support the growth of  
805 disabled veteran-owned businesses, (4) a component established in  
806 consultation with representatives from Connecticut-based banks and a  
807 banking industry association, as described in subsection [(e)] (f) of this  
808 section, and [(4)] (5) a component established in consultation with  
809 Connecticut Innovations, Incorporated, as described in subsection [(f)]  
810 (g) of this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 32-5a  
811 regarding relocation limits, the department may require, as a condition  
812 of receiving financial assistance pursuant to this section, that a small  
813 business receiving such assistance shall not relocate, as defined in  
814 section 32-5a, for five years after receiving such assistance or during the  
815 term of the loan, whichever is longer. All other conditions and penalties  
816 imposed pursuant to section 32-5a shall continue to apply to such small  
817 business.

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

821 (d) (1) There is established as part of the Small Business Express  
822 program at least one revolving loan fund to provide loans to eligible  
823 small businesses that are owned by one or more members of a minority.  
824 As used in this subsection, (A) "minority business development entity"  
825 means a nonprofit organization (i) having a lending portfolio on or  
826 before June 9, 2016, from which at least seventy-five per cent of lending  
827 is provided to minority-owned businesses state-wide; and (ii) that  
828 provided technical assistance on or before June 9, 2016, provided at least  
829 seventy-five per cent of such assistance was provided to minority-  
830 owned businesses state-wide; and (B) "minority" means (i) Black  
831 Americans, including all persons having origins in any of the Black  
832 African racial groups not of Hispanic origin; (ii) Hispanic Americans,  
833 including all persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South  
834 American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race; (iii) all

835 persons having origins in the Iberian Peninsula, including Portugal,  
836 regardless of race; (iv) women; (v) Asian Pacific Americans and Pacific  
837 islanders; or (vi) American Indians and persons having origins in any of  
838 the original peoples of North America and maintaining identifiable  
839 tribal affiliations through membership and participation or community  
840 identification.

841 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 32-7h, as amended by  
842 this act, the commissioner shall allocate from the available funding  
843 under the Small Business Express program a total of five million dollars  
844 for grants-in-aid to not more than two minority business development  
845 entities in each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 2016, to June 30, 2020,  
846 inclusive, for the purpose of establishing and administering minority  
847 business revolving loan funds. Moneys from such funds shall be used  
848 to (A) provide loans to eligible small businesses, and (B) fund the  
849 administrative costs associated with the provision of such loans by a  
850 minority business development entity, provided a minority business  
851 development entity may not use more than ten per cent of the amount  
852 received as a grant under this section to fund such costs. Such loans shall  
853 be used for acquisition or purchase of machinery and equipment,  
854 construction or leasehold improvements, relocation expenses, working  
855 capital, which may be used for payment of rent, or other business-  
856 related expenses, as authorized by the minority business development  
857 entity.

858 (3) Loans from a minority business revolving loan fund may be in  
859 amounts from ten thousand dollars to a maximum of five hundred  
860 thousand dollars, shall carry a maximum repayment rate of four per  
861 cent and shall be for a term of not more than ten years. The minority  
862 business development entity shall review and approve loan terms,  
863 conditions and collateral requirements in a manner that prioritizes job  
864 growth and retention.

865 (4) Any eligible small business owned by one or more members of a  
866 minority may apply for assistance from a minority business revolving  
867 loan fund, provided the minority business development entity shall

868 give priority to applicants that, as part of their business plan, are  
869 creating new jobs that will be maintained for not less than twelve  
870 consecutive months.

871 (5) Loans from a minority business revolving loan fund shall be  
872 provided in such a manner that, on or before five years after the date  
873 such loan fund is established, the annual funds or revenues derived  
874 from investment income, loan repayments or any other sources received  
875 by the minority business development entity in connection with such  
876 loan fund is sufficient to fund the administrative costs associated with  
877 such loan fund.

878 (6) A minority business development entity receiving a grant  
879 pursuant to this subsection shall annually submit to the commissioner a  
880 financial audit of grant expenditures until all grant moneys have been  
881 expended by such entity. Any such audit shall be prepared by an  
882 independent auditor and if the commissioner finds that any such grant  
883 is used for purposes that are not in conformity with uses set forth in  
884 subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection, the commissioner may  
885 require repayment of such grant.

886 (e) (1) There is established as part of the Small Business Express  
887 program a revolving loan fund to provide loans to eligible disabled  
888 veteran-owned businesses. As used in this subsection, (A) "disabled  
889 veteran" means a veteran, as defined in section 27-103, who has a  
890 disability rating of at least thirty per cent, as determined by the United  
891 States Department of Veterans Affairs; and (B) "disabled veteran-owned  
892 business" means a small business of which greater than fifty per cent is  
893 owned by one or more disabled veterans.

894 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 32-7h, as amended by  
895 this act, the commissioner shall utilize, of the available funding under  
896 the Small Business Express program, a total of two million dollars in  
897 each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 2027, to June 30, 2031, inclusive,  
898 for the purpose of establishing and administering a disabled veteran  
899 business revolving loan fund. Moneys from such fund shall be used to

900 (A) provide loans to eligible disabled veteran-owned businesses that  
901 have been formed for at least three years, as reflected in the records of  
902 the Commercial Recording Division of the office of the Secretary of the  
903 State, prior to the provision of any such loan, and (B) fund the  
904 administrative costs associated with the provision of such loans by the  
905 Department of Economic and Community Development, provided the  
906 department may not use more than ten per cent of such moneys to fund  
907 such costs. Such loans shall be used for acquisition or purchase of  
908 machinery and equipment, construction or leasehold improvements,  
909 relocation expenses, working capital, which may be used for payment  
910 of rent, or other business-related expenses, as prescribed by the  
911 commissioner.

912 (3) Loans from a disabled veteran business revolving loan fund may  
913 be in amounts from ten thousand dollars to a maximum of five hundred  
914 thousand dollars, shall carry a maximum repayment rate of four per  
915 cent and shall be for a term of not more than ten years. The  
916 commissioner shall review and approve loan terms, conditions and  
917 collateral requirements in a manner that prioritizes job growth and  
918 retention.

919 (4) Any eligible disabled veteran-owned business may apply for  
920 assistance from a disabled veteran business revolving loan fund,  
921 provided the commissioner shall give priority to applicants that, as part  
922 of their business plan, are creating new jobs that will be maintained for  
923 not less than twelve consecutive months.

924 (5) Loans from a disabled veteran business revolving loan fund shall  
925 be provided in such a manner that, on or before five years after the date  
926 such loan fund is established, the annual funds or revenues derived  
927 from investment income, loan repayments or any other sources received  
928 by the Department of Economic and Community Development in  
929 connection with such loan fund is sufficient to fund the administrative  
930 costs associated with such loan fund.

931 [(e)] (f) The commissioner, in consultation with representatives from

932 Connecticut-based banks and a banking industry association, may  
933 establish as part of the Small Business Express program a component  
934 operated in collaboration with Connecticut-based banks, which may  
935 include, but need not be limited to, loan guarantees, short-term loans  
936 used as a bridge to private sector financing and the transfer of loans  
937 issued under subsection (c) of this section. Any loans issued under such  
938 component shall be used for acquisition or purchase of machinery and  
939 equipment, construction or leasehold improvements, relocation  
940 expenses, working capital, which may be used for payment of rent, or  
941 other business-related expenses, as authorized by the commissioner.  
942 The provisions of subsections (c), [and] (d) and (e) of this section shall  
943 not be construed to apply to such component. Such component shall be  
944 administered by Connecticut Innovations, Incorporated, in  
945 collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community  
946 Development. For purposes of this section, "Connecticut-based banks"  
947 means banks and out-of-state banks, each as defined in section 36a-2,  
948 having deposit-taking branches in the state.

949 [(f)] (g) The commissioner, in consultation with Connecticut  
950 Innovations, Incorporated, may establish as part of the Small Business  
951 Express program a component operated in collaboration with  
952 Connecticut Innovations, Incorporated, which may include, but need  
953 not be limited to, financial assistance consistent with the provisions and  
954 purposes of sections 32-23e, 32-23ii and 32-265. Such component may be  
955 administered by Connecticut Innovations, Incorporated, in  
956 collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community  
957 Development.

958 [(g)] (h) Not later than February 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the  
959 commissioner shall provide a report, in accordance with the provisions  
960 of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General  
961 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and  
962 bonding, appropriations, commerce and labor. Such report shall include  
963 available data on (1) the number of small businesses that received  
964 assistance under the Small Business Express program and the general

965 categories of such businesses, (2) the amounts and types of assistance  
966 provided, (3) the total number of jobs on the date of application and the  
967 number proposed to be created or retained, (4) the most recent  
968 employment figures of the small businesses receiving assistance, (5) the  
969 default rate of small businesses that received assistance under said  
970 program, and (6) the progress of the lenders participating in said  
971 program in becoming self-sustainable. The contents of such report shall  
972 also be included in the department's annual report.

973 [(h)] (i) The commissioner may contract with nongovernmental  
974 entities, including, but not limited to, nonprofit organizations, economic  
975 and community development organizations, lending institutions, and  
976 technical assistance providers to carry out the provisions of this section.

977 Sec. 18. Section 32-7h of the general statutes is repealed and the  
978 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

979 (a) There is established an account to be known as the "small business  
980 express assistance account" which will be a separate, nonlapsing  
981 account within the General Fund. The account shall contain any moneys  
982 required by law to be deposited in the account. Repayment of principal  
983 and interest on loans shall be credited to such fund and shall become  
984 part of the assets of the fund. Moneys in the account shall be expended  
985 by the Department of Economic and Community Development for the  
986 purposes of the Small Business Express program established pursuant  
987 to section 32-7g, as amended by this act. Except as provided in  
988 [subsection (d)] subsections (d) and (e) of section 32-7g, as amended by  
989 this act, all moneys received for the purposes of the Small Business  
990 Express program and payments of principal and interest on any loans  
991 given under said program shall be credited to the account.

992 (b) Except as provided in [subsection (d)] subsections (d) and (e) of  
993 section 32-7g, as amended by this act, the Commissioner of Economic  
994 and Community Development may provide for the payment of any  
995 administrative expenses or other costs incurred by the department or its  
996 lender partners in carrying out the purposes of the Small Business

1097 Express program not to exceed five per cent of funding from this  
1098 program from the account established pursuant to subsection (a) of this  
1099 section, provided one per cent shall be dedicated to develop capacity for  
1100 capital construction projects for minority business enterprises.

1101 Sec. 19. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Up to \$45,000 of the amount  
1102 appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs, for the fiscal year  
1103 ending June 30, 2026, shall be transferred to The University of  
1104 Connecticut for the purpose of The School of Public Policy at The  
1105 University of Connecticut conducting the studies described in  
1106 subsection (b) of this section. The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs and  
1107 The University of Connecticut shall enter into a memorandum of  
1108 understanding to effectuate the provisions of this subsection.

1109 (b) (1) The School of Public Policy at The University of Connecticut,  
1110 in consultation with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and  
1111 Management, shall conduct a study of the projected impacts on state  
1112 and municipal finances of (A) raising the exemption amounts set forth  
1113 in subdivisions (19) to (26), inclusive, of section 12-81 of the general  
1114 statutes, and (B) imposing a limit on the amount of property belonging  
1115 to, or held in trust for, an individual described in any of said  
1116 subdivisions in order to be eligible for such an exemption. Such study  
1117 shall account for increases to such exemption amounts in accordance  
1118 with the provisions of section 12-62g of the general statutes and for  
1119 additional exemptions granted in accordance with the provisions of  
1120 section 12-81g of the general statutes. Not later than February 1, 2026,  
1121 The School of Public Policy at The University of Connecticut and the  
1122 Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall jointly submit,  
1123 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,  
1124 a report detailing the results of such study and any recommendations  
1125 for legislation to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly  
1126 having cognizance of matters relating to veterans' and military affairs,  
1127 finance, revenue and bonding, appropriations and the budgets of state  
1128 agencies and planning and development.

1129 (2) The School of Public Policy at The University of Connecticut, in



1030 consultation with the manager of the Office of Advocacy and  
 1031 Assistance, shall conduct a study of the efficacy of municipalities in  
 1032 providing assistance to veterans under section 27-135 of the general  
 1033 statutes. Such study shall identify strengths and limitations in the  
 1034 provision of such assistance and develop solutions for implementation  
 1035 to address areas needing improvement, broken down by each  
 1036 municipality. Not later than February 1, 2026, The School of Public  
 1037 Policy at The University of Connecticut and the manager of the Office  
 1038 of Advocacy and Assistance shall jointly submit, in accordance with the  
 1039 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, a report detailing the  
 1040 results of such study and any recommendations for legislation to the  
 1041 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
 1042 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, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 15	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	51-297
Sec. 16	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	27-102l(b)
Sec. 17	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	32-7g
Sec. 18	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	32-7h
Sec. 19	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section