

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5406 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING AN AWARD HONORING THE HEROIC WARTIME SERVICE OF CERTAIN VETERANS AND RESERVE MEMBERS OF THE

Title: ARMED FORCES AND MINOR AND TECHNICAL REVISIONS.

Vote Date: 3/10/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/3/2026

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Christopher Poulos, 81st Dist.

Rep. Michael Quinn, 82nd Dist.

Rep. Nicholas Menapace, 37th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would make minor changes to a statute regarding certain awards granted to veterans and members of the armed forces. This bill serves as a contingency reserve bill to address any issues that may arise prior to its enactment.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language for this bill includes multiple different provisions to improve quality of life, safety, and general affordability for veterans and members of the armed forces. In response to the increase of veterans entering into contracts with private agents that charge to connect veterans with their benefits without knowing about alternative services, Section 1 of the substitute language requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to post warnings about agents and attorneys like this that are not recognized by the federal government. Section 2 requires the DVA to update the portion of their website that lists charitable veteran service organizations in order to combat the lack of awareness regarding these organizations and the assistance that they provide. Similarly, Section 3 authorizes the DVA's Office of Advocacy and Assistance to train veterans' service officers in community and nonprofit organizations that assist veterans in order to provide as comprehensive service to veterans as possible. Many veterans point to the lack of dental care as a big shortcoming in federal veterans' health care benefits; Section 4 creates a Veterans' Dental Care Access Program within the DVA that authorizes the department to work with a state-wide organization of

dental practitioners, and [Section 5](#) provides a funding mechanism for this program through the Soldiers Sailors and Marines Fund. In order to address the shortage of nursing home beds available to veterans through the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs health care system, [Section 6](#) creates a task force to study ways to encourage more nursing homes to contract with the USDVA. [Section 7](#) exempts returning active duty servicemembers from the payment of late fees with the DMV for ninety days after returning in order to extend the grace period for veterans reintegrating into civilian life. Because a lack of reliable access to transportation is a consistent hurdle to veteran employment, [Sections 8 and 9](#) waive the initial fee for veterans to obtain a driver's license. To expand upon efforts in 2025 to increase the transferability of special education services for military families, [Section 10](#) tasks the state's early intervention system with taking necessary steps to ensure a smooth transition. Lastly, per recommendations from the Military Department and from the Legislative Commissioner's Office, [Sections 11 through 16](#) make a number of technical and clarifying changes to [CGS Sec. 27](#), most notably changing language regarding the Governor's military staff and renaming the training facility in Niantic from "Camp Nett at Niantic" to "Camp Nett"

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[James Amaro, Chairman, Manchester Veterans Advisory Committee](#): Mr. Amaro expressed his support for this bill, noting the importance of honoring veterans and members of the armed forces.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Sam Sims

Date: 3/20/26