

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, October 19, 1971.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

In accordance with the provisions of Article LVI of the Amendments to the Constitution, I am returning, herewith, House Bill No. 6270 entitled "AN ACT PROVIDING ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE SUITABLE RECOGNITION OF THOSE RESIDENTS OF MASSACHUSETTS WHO SHALL HAVE SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT."

On August 30, I recommended that you authorize the extension of the Vietnam bonus program by an additional \$5 million. I indicated then that I could not in good conscience recommend additional funds for this purpose without recommending to you once again that the program be restricted to \$300 bonuses to those who have served in the Vietnam combat area.

You rejected that proposal, and instead have sent me a \$10 million bond issue. This will simply continue the same program with every indication that these funds will soon be exhausted.

This program, begun in 1968 with a six million dollar bond issue, requires the payment of \$300 bonuses to Massachusetts veterans who served in the Vietnam combat area, and \$200 bonuses to those who did not serve in the combat area. Two-thirds of the funds are being directed toward the veterans who had never served in the combat area.

The original and subsequent bond issues have now totaled \$41 million, exclusive of interest. This bill would raise that total to \$51 million.

I have appealed to you to limit this program to Vietnam veterans, and reminded you of the many services Massachusetts provides to its returning veterans. I again point out that Massachusetts provides liberal education allowances to veterans and their children; that they provide benefits to needy veterans, operate two soldiers' homes, grant preference to veterans in state service, and give special allowances to veterans when they retire as state employees.

I believe I must appeal to you once again to curtail this program. With the adoption of my proposal, the \$5 million should carry the program through the next two years, before which time I and all Americans hope and expect that the American involvement in Vietnam will be ended.

I cannot approve the endless continuation of this program in its present form. I urge you to adopt my amendment as a fair, sensible and controllable proposal which is designed to assist those veterans to whom the "Vietnam Conflict Loan" should be allocated.

I therefore recommend the bill be amended as follows: —

By striking out, in line seven of Section 2, the word "ten" and inserting in place thereof the word: — five; and by adding at the end thereof the following new sections: —

SECTION 3. Chapter 646 of the acts of 1968 is hereby amended by striking out section 1, as amended by sections 1 and 2 of chapter 325 of the acts of 1969, and inserting in place thereof the following section: —

Section 1. Upon application, as hereinafter provided, there shall be allowed and paid out of the treasury of the Commonwealth without appropriation the sum of three hundred dollars to each person who shall have served in the armed forces of the United States in active service for a period of six months or more since July first, nineteen hundred and fifty-eight until the end of the Vietnam conflict as determined by federal authorities, who performed active service outside the continental limits of the United States in the Vietnam area, as said area is described by proper federal authority, and who was discharged or released under honorable conditions from such service; provided, that the domicile of every person on account of whose service the application is filed shall have been in the commonwealth for a period of not less than six months immediately prior to the time of his entry into the service.

"Active service in the armed forces", as used in this section shall not include active duty for training in the army, national guard or air national guard or active duty for training as a reservist in the armed forces of the United States.

The benefits of this section shall extend to any commissioned officer, warrant officer or person enlisted for an indefinite enlistment serving in the armed forces of the United States, who was domiciled as provided in this section and who served in said armed forces in

active service for not less than three years since July first, nineteen hundred and fifty-eight in any grade or grades, and who is not otherwise entitled to said benefits solely for the reason that he has not received a discharge or release under honorable conditions from such service.

The benefits of this section shall also extend to include those persons who served on active duty less than six months since July first, nineteen hundred and sixty-eight, who have been discharged or released due to a disability or disease incurred in the line of duty, or were killed or died of injuries incurred while serving on active duty of less than six months; provided, that they meet the other requirements of this act.

SECTION 4. Notwithstanding any provision of section one of chapter six hundred and forty-six of the acts of nineteen hundred and sixty-eight, as amended by section three of this act, the provisions of said section one and amendments thereto as in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this act shall remain applicable to any person who, upon application, would have been eligible to receive benefits thereunder prior to the effective date of this act.

Respectfully submitted,

FRANCIS W. SARGENT,
Governor of the Commonwealth.

