

HOUSE No. 298

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF VETERANS' SERVICES
LEVERETT SALTONSTALL BUILDING, GOVERNMENT CENTER
100 CAMBRIDGE STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02202, NOVEMBER 1, 1990.

The Honorable Michael Joseph Connolly, *Secretary of the Commonwealth*
State House, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Secretary Connolly:

Pursuant to the provisions of section 33 of Chapter 30 of the General Laws, I am pleased to submit to you the Legislative recommendations of the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services for the 1991 session of the General Court.

A detailed explanation of the reasons for each recommendation is attached.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM D. THOMPSON,
Commissioner.

*LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
OF VETERANS' SERVICES FOR 1991*

1. AN ACT RELATIVE TO CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION FEES OF VETERANS:

Paragraph N of section 5 of Chapter 31 of the General Laws permits the Personnel Administrator of the Department of Personnel Administration to establish a schedule of fees to be collected from applicants taking civil service examinations, and to provide for the waiver of such fees in appropriate instances. The Administrator has presently waived the fee requirement for approximately 25 various groups of individuals.

This bill would specifically exempt veterans from the fee requirement.

2. AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE ANNUITY PAID TO CERTAIN BLIND, PARAPLEGIC, AND AMPUTEE VETERANS:

Presently, 258 severely disabled blind, paraplegic, and amputee veterans receive an annuity of \$500.00 annually pursuant to section 6B of Chapter 115 of the General Laws.

The amount of this annuity has not changed since the payments began pursuant to Chapter 660 of the Acts of 1949. This bill would increase the amount of the annuity from \$500.00 to \$1,200.00 annually.

3. AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE REIMBURSEMENT TO CITIES AND TOWNS OF CERTAIN BURIAL EXPENSES OF INDIGENT VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS:

This bill would remove the ambiguity created in section 8 of Chapter 115, of the General Laws when section 2 of Chapter 633 of the Acts of 1983 increased the amount of the burial allowance payable to indigent veterans and their dependents.

Through inadvertance, this Act failed to remove the third sentence of section 8 which was inconsistent with the amendment.

This bill would strike out the third sentence and remove the

inconsistency. This amounts to a technical correction only and would have no financial impact.

Enactment of this legislation would greatly clarify the interpretation of section 8 of Chapter 115.

4. AN ACT RELATIVE TO THOSE VETERANS WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN MILITARY ACTIONS FACING ARMED OPPOSITION:

Clause 43 of section 7 of Chapter 4 of the General Laws defines the wartime service required by those veterans of the Armed Forces seeking eligibility for the various benefits and preferences available from the Commonwealth. Since the conclusion of the Vietnam War on May 7, 1975 the General Court has amended Clause 43 to include those veterans who served with the Lebanese Peace Keeping Force and the Grenada Rescue Mission in which participants of both campaigns were awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal established by the President of the United States by Executive Order 10977, dated December 4, 1961.

Since the conclusion of these two campaigns the Medal was again awarded when the United States committed its Armed Forces against hostile forces in Libya, the Persian Gulf, Panama and Saudi Arabia, the award being strictly limited to only those troops engaged in the operations.

This Bill would amend the wartime service requirements in Clause 43 to include those in receipt of the Medal due to their participation in overseas military actions facing armed opposition and make them eligible for the various veterans benefits and preferences available from the Commonwealth.

5. AN ACT PROVIDING REVENUE FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SOLDIERS' HOMES:

This Bill provides for the issuance of distinctive motor vehicle plates by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to veterans as defined by clause 43 of section 7 of Chapter 4 of the General Laws. Said plates would bear the word Veteran on the left hand side and would be available to veterans upon application and upon the payment of the fee established by the provisions of section 33 of Chapter 90 of the General Laws for distinctive initial plates.

All fees received by the Registrar in the issuance of these plates in excess of the fees set for the usual and customary registration of a motor vehicle would be credited on the books of the Commonwealth, in equal amounts to the Soldiers' Home in Massachusetts and the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke established pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 115A of the General Laws.

6. AN ACT REQUIRING THE TRAINING OF CERTAIN VETERANS AGENTS AND DIRECTORS OF VETERANS SERVICES:

This Bill would require the Commissioner of Veterans' Services to provide, within sixty days of original appointment, a period of training and education to Veterans Agents appointed pursuant to section 3 of Chapter 115 of the General Laws, and to Directors of Veterans Services appointed pursuant to section 10 of Chapter 115 of the General Laws.

Said training would include education in the proper disbursement of Veterans Benefits and in the furnishing of such advice, information and assistance to veterans and their dependents as may be necessary to enable them to procure such other benefits to which they may be entitled.