

HOUSE No. 3720

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, October 28, 2013.

The committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the Senate Bill relative to veterans' allowances, labor, outreach, and recognition (Senate, No. 1885, printed as amended), reports recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the text contained in House document numbered 3720.

For the committee,

BRIAN S. DEMPSEY.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—
In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen
—

By striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the following:—

1 SECTION 1. Section 61 of chapter 7 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after subsection (i ½) the following subsection:-

3 (i¾) SDO shall, on an annual basis and in consultation with the department of veterans’
4 services, establish goals for participation on public projects for service-disabled, veteran-owned
5 small businesses interested in and capable of providing construction and design services on
6 public construction and design projects. In calculating such goals, SDO shall incorporate data
7 from the United States Department of Defense and the Massachusetts National Guard reflecting
8 the percentage of the commonwealth’s population that are service-disabled veterans.

9 SECTION 2. Subsection (a) of section 8E of chapter 12 of the General Laws, as so
10 appearing, is hereby amended by inserting, after the words “U.S.A.”, in line 17, the following
11 words:- ; Department of Massachusetts, Marine Corps League, Inc.

12 SECTION 3. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
13 following section:-

14 Section 43. (a) No student at a postsecondary institution shall incur academic or financial
15 penalties by virtue of performing military service on behalf of the United States. A student who
16 enrolls in an academic course at any of the institutions in subsection (b) but is unable to complete
17 an academic course because that student is called to, or enlists in, active duty, as defined in
18 section 1 of chapter 15E, shall have the option to complete the course at a later date without
19 penalty or withdraw from the course with a full refund of fees and tuition paid. If the academic
20 course is no longer available upon the student’s return from active duty, the student shall be
21 permitted to complete a replacement course for equivalent credit without penalty. If the student
22 chooses to withdraw from the course, the student’s record shall reflect that the withdrawal is due
23 to active military service.

24 (b) This section shall apply to all postsecondary institutions in the commonwealth
25 including: (i) the system of public institutions of higher education, as defined in section 5; (ii)
26 private occupation schools, as defined in section 263 of chapter 112; and (iii) private colleges,
27 universities or other institutions of higher learning.

28 SECTION 4. Subsection (m) of section 8 of chapter 15E of the General Laws, as
29 appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “military”
30 in line 86, the following words:- “, National Guard or Reserve”.

31 SECTION 5. Section 67A of chapter 33 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
32 amended by inserting, after the word “action”, in line 3, the following:- or who died in service
33 while in a designated combat area in the line of duty.

34 SECTION 6. Section 8A of chapter 58 of the General Laws is hereby repealed.

35 SECTION 7. Section 5 of chapter 59 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking
36 out the first paragraph, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof
37 the following paragraph:-

38 The following property shall be exempt from taxation and the date of determination as to
39 age, ownership or other qualifying factors required by any clause shall be July first of each year
40 unless another meaning is clearly apparent from the context; provided, however, that any person
41 who receives an exemption under clause Seventeenth, Seventeenth C, Seventeenth C½,
42 Seventeenth D, Twenty-second, Twenty-second A, Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C,
43 Twenty-second D, Twenty-second E, Twenty-second F, Thirty-seventh, Thirty-seventh A, Forty-
44 first, Forty-first B, Forty-first C, Forty-first C½, Forty-second, Forty-third, Fifty-sixth or Fifty-
45 seventh shall not receive an exemption on the same property under any other provision of this
46 section, except clause Eighteenth or Forty-fifth.

47 SECTION 8. Clause twenty-second E of said section 5 of said chapter 59, as so
48 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the last paragraph.

49 SECTION 9. Said section 5 of said chapter 59 is hereby amended by inserting after
50 clause Twenty-second E, as so appearing, the following clause:-

51 Twenty-second F, Real estate of soldiers and sailors, who are veterans, as defined in the
52 forty-third clause of section 7 of chapter 4, and their spouses, who according to the records of the
53 Veterans Administration or of any branch of the armed forces of the United States by reason of
54 injury received while in such service and in the line of duty are paraplegics; provided that: the
55 veteran or spouse is a legal resident of the commonwealth; the veteran’s last discharge or release
56 from the armed forces was under other than dishonorable conditions; the veteran was domiciled
57 in the commonwealth for at least 6 months prior to entering such service or resided in the
58 commonwealth for 5 consecutive years prior to the date of filing for exemption under this clause;

59 provided, that such real estate is occupied as the veteran's domicile by such person; and provided
60 further, that if the property is greater than a single-family house, then only that value of so much
61 of the house as is occupied by the person as such person's domicile shall be exempted. An
62 exemption under this clause shall continue unchanged for the benefit of the surviving spouse
63 after the death of such disabled veteran as long as the surviving spouse of the qualified veteran
64 shall remain an owner and occupant of a domicile subject to the exemption.

65 No real estate shall be exempt if the assessors adjudge that it has been conveyed to a
66 soldier or sailor to evade taxation.

67 After the assessors have allowed an exemption under this clause no further evidence of
68 the existence of the facts required by this clause shall be required in any subsequent year in the
69 city or town in which the exemption has been allowed; provided, however, that the assessors
70 may refuse to allow an exemption in any subsequent year if they become aware that the soldier
71 or sailor did not satisfy all of the requisites of this clause at the time the exemption was first
72 granted.

73 Two thousand dollars of this exemption or up to the sum of \$175, whichever basis is
74 applicable, shall be borne by the city or town; the balance shall be borne by the commonwealth;
75 and the state treasurer shall annually reimburse the city or town for the amount of the tax which
76 otherwise would have been collected on account of this balance.

77 Notwithstanding this section, in any city or town which accepts this paragraph, said
78 exemptions available under clauses twenty-second, twenty-second A, twenty-second B, twenty-
79 second C, twenty-second D, twenty-second E and twenty-second F may be granted to otherwise
80 eligible persons who have resided in the commonwealth for 1 year prior to the date of filing for
81 exemptions under the applicable clause.

82 SECTION 10. Section 5C of said chapter 59, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
83 striking out, in lines 13 and 14, the words "of section eight A of chapter fifty-eight and".

84 SECTION 11. Said chapter 59 is hereby amended by inserting after section 5C the
85 following section:-

86 Section 5C½. In a city or town which accepts this section and is certified by the
87 commissioner to be assessing all property at full and fair cash valuation, a taxpayer who
88 otherwise qualifies for an exemption under any clause specifically listed in the first paragraph of
89 section 5 for which receipt of another exemption on the same property is prohibited, shall be
90 granted an additional exemption which shall be uniform for all exemptions and the amount of
91 which shall not exceed 100 per cent of the exemption for which the taxpayer qualifies, as may be
92 determined by the legislative body of the city or town, subject to its charter, not later than the
93 beginning of the fiscal year to which the tax relates. Notwithstanding any provision of this
94 chapter to the contrary, the exemption shall be in addition to any exemption allowable under

95 section 5; provided, however, that in no instance shall the taxable valuation of such property,
96 after all applicable exemptions, be reduced below 10 per cent of its full and fair cash valuation,
97 except through the applicability of clause Eighteenth of section 5; and provided, further, that the
98 additional exemption shall not result in any taxpayer paying less than the taxes paid in the
99 preceding fiscal year. Acceptance of this section by a city or town shall not increase the amount
100 which it otherwise would have been reimbursed by the commonwealth under the respective
101 clause.

102 SECTION 12. Section 5N of said chapter 59 of the General Laws, as appearing in the
103 2012 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the figure “4”, in line 5, the
104 following words:- or a spouse of a veteran in the case where the veteran is deceased or has a
105 service-connected disability.

106 SECTION 13. Section 59 of said chapter 59, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
107 striking out the third paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

108 An application for exemption under clause Seventeenth, Seventeenth C, Seventeenth C½,
109 Seventeenth D, Eighteenth, Twenty-second, Twenty-second A, Twenty-second B, Twenty-
110 second C, Twenty-second D, Twenty-second E, Twenty-second F, Thirty-seventh, Thirty-
111 seventh A, Forty-first, Forty-first B, Forty-first C, Forty-first C½, Forty-second, Forty-third,
112 Fifty-second, Fifty-third, Fifty-sixth and Fifty-seventh of section 5 may be made on or before
113 December 15 of the year to which the tax relates, or if the bill or notice is first sent after
114 September 15 of such year, within 3 months after the bill or notice is so sent.

115 SECTION 14. Section 1 of chapter 60A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
116 amended by striking out, in lines 135 and 136, the words “continental United States” and
117 inserting in place thereof the following word:- commonwealth.

118 SECTION 15. Chapter 68 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
119 section 19 the following section:-

120 Section 19A. Any person or charitable organization established for an advocacy,
121 benevolent, educational, humane, patriotic, philanthropic, scientific or social welfare purpose on
122 behalf of veterans or the military which intends to solicit contributions from persons within the
123 commonwealth or to have contributions solicited on its behalf by other charitable organizations
124 shall, prior to such solicitation, apply for designation as a veterans’ charitable organization on a
125 form issued by the division of public charities that shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the
126 name of the organization and the purpose for which it is organized; (ii) the address of the
127 organization and the address of any offices in the commonwealth or, if the organization does not
128 maintain an office, the name and address of the person having custody of its financial records;
129 and (iii) the charitable purposes for which solicited contributions shall be used. The secretary of
130 veterans’ services shall publish on the department’s website a list of the names of each veterans’
131 charitable organization. Designation as a veterans’ charitable organization shall be valid for 3

132 years. Any person or organization applying for designation as a veterans' charitable organization
133 shall be exempt from any registration fee or renewal fee under section 19.

134 SECTION 16. Section 28 of said chapter 68, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is
135 hereby amended by adding the following subsection:-

136 (f) No person or organization shall claim to be a representative of a veterans' charitable
137 organization with the intent to solicit contributions that benefit or profit any person or
138 organization other than the veterans' charitable organization.

139 SECTION 17. Section 1 of chapter 90, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting
140 after the definition of "Intersecting way" the following definition:-

141 "Killed in action", a casualty classification determined by the United States Department
142 of Defense when a member of the armed forces of the United States has been killed while
143 performing military operations while serving the United States in a conflict recognized by the
144 United States Department of Defense.

145 SECTION 18. Section 2 of said chapter 90, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
146 inserting after the word "RECIPIENT", in line 407, the following words:- and the words
147 "COMBAT WOUNDED".

148 SECTION 19. Said section 2 of said chapter 90, as so appearing, is hereby further
149 amended by striking out the twenty-first paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following
150 paragraph:-

151 The registrar shall furnish without charge to the owner of a private passenger motor
152 vehicle who is a Gold Star parent, child, sibling, grandchild or spouse of a member of the
153 military, upon presentation of satisfactory evidence of such status as determined by the registrar,
154 a distinctive registration plate that reads "Gold Star Family" for 1 private passenger motor
155 vehicle owned and principally used by that person or a distinctive "Gold Star Family" emblem to
156 be affixed to a registration plate for a motorcycle privately owned and principally used by that
157 person. The registrar may issue a distinctive "Gold Star Family" registration of up to 6 characters
158 for 1 private passenger motor vehicle owned and principally used by that person. A Gold Star
159 parent, child, sibling, grandchild or spouse of a member of the military that was killed in action
160 or otherwise died as a result of immediate injuries sustained from such action may have a "KIA"
161 designation on the "Gold Star Family" emblem affixed to a registration plate for a private
162 passenger motor vehicle or motorcycle privately owned and principally used by that person. The
163 registrar shall furnish at no additional cost a "KIA" designation on any previously issued "Gold
164 Star" registration plate for an individual who meets the requirements of this section.

165 SECTION 20. Section 2E of said chapter 90, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
166 adding the following subsection:-

167 (d) The registrar shall furnish, upon application, to the owner of a private passenger
168 motor vehicle, a distinctive registration plate which shall display on its face the words “Support
169 our Veterans” to honor men and women who have served in the armed forces of the United
170 States and the armed forces of the commonwealth. There shall be a fee of not less than \$50 for
171 such plates in addition to the established registration fee for a private passenger motor vehicle,
172 which shall be payable at the time of registration of the vehicle and at each renewal thereof. The
173 portion of the total remaining fee, after the deduction of costs directly attributable to the issuance
174 of such plates, shall be deposited in a registry retained revenue account. Of the remaining portion
175 of such fee, there shall be an application process designed and administered by the secretary of
176 the department of veterans’ services to distribute such funds once during each fiscal year for the
177 purpose of administering grants to programs or organizations that fund additional services or
178 conduct research, including, but not limited to, the following: (i) veterans’ mental health and
179 substance abuse; (ii) veterans’ housing and homelessness; (iii) veterans’ health care; (iv)
180 veterans’ disability benefits; (v) long-term care of veterans; (vi) veteran employment and
181 employment training; (vii) veterans’ education; and (viii) Gold Star family support. In order to
182 expend funds from this account, the secretary of the department of veterans’ services shall
183 appoint a 3-member funding authorization committee. The committee shall authorize the
184 expenditure of funds from this special fund through an application process developed and
185 administered by the committee. The secretary shall be a member and act as the chairperson of the
186 committee. One member of the committee shall be a member of the Governor’s Advisory
187 Council on Veterans’ Services, who shall be appointed by the governor. One member of the
188 committee shall be a veteran representative of the public with no financial interest in funding
189 programs and services, who shall be appointed by the governor. No member of the legislature
190 shall serve on the committee. Any entity awarded funds under this section, in any fiscal year,
191 shall not be eligible for funding for the next 2 subsequent fiscal years.

192 SECTION 21. Section 1B of chapter 112 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
193 amended by adding the following subsection:-

194 (f) The director and each of the boards of registration and examination under the
195 supervision of the director shall waive the initial license application fee or certification fee
196 granted under subsections (a) to (e), inclusive.

197 SECTION 22. Chapter 149 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
198 section 44½, the following section:-

199 Section 44¾. Notwithstanding chapter 151B, a private, nonpublic employer in the
200 commonwealth may provide a preference in promotion or hiring to: (1) a veteran; (2) the spouse
201 of an honorably discharged veteran who the United States Veterans’ Administration determines
202 to be 100 per cent disabled as a result of enemy action or a service-connected accident; or (3) the
203 surviving spouse of a veteran.

204 SECTION 23. Chapter 272 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
205 section 42A the following section:-

206 Section 42B. Whoever willfully pickets, loiters or otherwise creates a disturbance within
207 500 feet of a funeral home, church, temple, burial or other building where military funeral
208 services are being held, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$2,000 or by imprisonment
209 for not more than 2 years in a house of correction, or both.

210 SECTION 24. Section 4 of chapter 73 of the acts of 1986 is hereby repealed.

211 SECTION 25. The secretary of health and human services shall establish and implement
212 an ongoing veterans' home modification program through the Massachusetts rehabilitation
213 commission. The commissioner of the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission, in collaboration
214 with the secretary of veterans' services, shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry
215 out a veterans' home modifications program for any veteran who was called to active duty after
216 September 11, 2001, who has suffered a service connected disability and who requires home
217 modifications services to function more independently in the veteran's home and community.
218 The purpose of the veterans' home modification program is to provide funding on behalf of
219 veterans for home modifications services made necessary by the functional limitations associated
220 with the veteran's service connected disability. The commissioner and secretary of veterans'
221 services shall, to the best of the commissioner's and the secretary's knowledge, identify veterans
222 eligible for this program and provide a cost estimate for the purpose of appropriations for this
223 program for fiscal year 2015 and beyond. The cost estimate shall be reported to the house and
224 senate committee on ways and means and the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs not
225 later than March 1, 2014.

226 SECTION 26. (a) There is hereby established the Massachusetts Servicemember Post-
227 Deployment Council to make recommendations regarding the implementation of a program in
228 Massachusetts to support service members transitioning to civilian life after deployment.

229 (b) The council shall consist of 27 members: 2 members of the senate appointed by the
230 president of the senate, 1 of whom shall be a member of the joint committee on veterans and
231 federal affairs and 1 of whom shall be a member of the joint committee on mental health and
232 substance abuse; 1 member shall be the ranking minority member of the senate who is on the
233 joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities, the joint committee on labor
234 and workforce development or the joint committee on housing, or the member's designee; 2
235 members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of
236 representatives, 1 of whom shall be a member of the joint committee on veterans and federal
237 affairs and 1 of whom shall be a member of the joint committee on mental health and substance
238 abuse; 1 member shall be the ranking minority member of the house of representatives who is
239 on the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities, the joint committee on
240 labor and workforce development or the joint committee on housing, or the member's designee;

241 1 member shall be the secretary of health and human services, or a designee from the executive
242 staff to include representation from the department of public health, the department of mental
243 health, the department of children and families and the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission;
244 1 member shall be the secretary of veterans' services, or a designee; 1 member shall be the
245 adjutant general of the national guard, or a designee; 1 member shall be the commissioner of the
246 Massachusetts rehabilitation commission, or a designee; 1 member shall be the undersecretary
247 of the department of housing and community development, or a designee; 1 member shall be the
248 secretary of labor and workforce development, or a designee; 1 member shall be the secretary of
249 education, or a designee; and 14 members shall be appointed by the governor, 2 of whom shall
250 be veterans of Operation New Dawn, Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom,
251 and 1 from a list of nominees submitted by each of the following organizations: Massachusetts
252 Coalition for Suicide Prevention, Massachusetts Psychological Association, Massachusetts
253 Psychiatric Society, Inc., Massachusetts Association of Mental Health, Association for
254 Behavioral Healthcare, Inc., Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association,
255 Massachusetts Women Veterans Network, The Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General
256 Hospital Home Base Program, the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund, the federal Veterans
257 Administration, the Massachusetts Hospital Association, the Military Friends Foundation and the
258 Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers.

259 (c) The term of office for each appointed member shall be 2 years, or until a successor is
260 appointed in the case of a vacancy. The council shall, at its first organizational meeting, elect a
261 member to serve as chairperson for a 2-year term. The council shall also elect a vice-chairperson
262 for a 2-year term and a clerk for a 2-year term. No member shall receive any compensation for
263 serving on the council.

264 (d) The council shall perform and make recommendations pertaining on how best to
265 operationalize and quantify the following duties which may include, but shall not be limited to:
266 (i) examining and evaluating the effectiveness of veterans' suicide prevention policies; (ii)
267 examining and evaluating the effectiveness of resilience training for veterans' personnel; (iii)
268 developing recommendations on ways in which veterans' support service needs may be promptly
269 assessed upon return from deployment; (iv) developing recommendations for methods by which
270 the commonwealth may identify, evaluate and refer service members returning to civilian life
271 post-deployment for assistance with education, employment, health care, housing and other
272 services; (v) providing recommendations for improving communication between mental health
273 support services and veterans who may benefit from such services; (vi) providing
274 recommendations for improving observation and treatment plans for returning veterans; (vii)
275 developing recommendations for providing mental health counseling services to combat the
276 effects of post-traumatic stress injuries for post-deployment veterans; (viii) examining ways in
277 which the commonwealth may reduce stress, anxiety and depression among returning veterans
278 and family members of returning veterans; (ix) providing recommendations on improving health
279 access assistance, including analyzing: (1) barriers prohibiting veterans from receiving coverage

280 upon their residency in the commonwealth; (2) tools to educate active duty members who intend
281 to reside in the commonwealth on their ability to acquire health care coverage in the
282 commonwealth; (3) the resources available to military members to help afford coverage upon
283 discharge; (4) the fluctuating income of service members upon discharge; and (5) the amount of
284 veterans who are discharged and upon residency in the commonwealth are without health care
285 coverage; provided, however, the council may form a subcommittee to implement this clause;
286 and (x) identifying the needs of women veterans relative to issues including, but not limited to,
287 compensation, rehabilitation, outreach, health care, education and other issues facing women
288 veterans in the community. The council may hold public hearings to assist in the collection and
289 evaluation of data and testimony.

290 (e) The council shall submit its findings and recommendations, including a detailed re-
291 entry program plan relative to servicemembers who return to civilian life after deployment,
292 together with recommendations for legislation to carry out those recommendations into effect by
293 filing the same with the house and senate clerks, the house and senate committees on ways and
294 means, the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs and the joint committee on mental
295 health and substance abuse not later than September 15, 2015.

296 SECTION 27. (a) The department of public health shall issue guidance to acute hospitals
297 and ambulance service providers in order to establish the systematic identification of veterans
298 and military service members following clinical care to effect appropriate referrals consistent
299 with the privacy protections offered by federal and state laws and regulations to the department
300 of veterans' services and to enable and promote access to all available resources, supports and
301 benefits.

302 (b) The department of veterans' services shall submit quarterly aggregate data reports on
303 all referrals to the department of public health.

304 SECTION 28. (a) There is hereby established a special commission to study and make
305 recommendations to create a state office of veterans' employment and business assistance with a
306 goal of expanding business and employment opportunities for veterans.

307 (b) The commission shall consist of 14 members: 3 members of the house of
308 representatives, 1 of whom shall be the chair of the joint committee on veterans and federal
309 affairs, 1 of whom shall be the chair of the joint committee on labor and workforce development
310 and 1 of whom shall be the ranking minority member of the house of representatives who is on
311 the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs or the joint committee on economic
312 development and emerging technologies, or the member's designee; 3 members of the senate, 1
313 of whom shall be the chair of the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, 1 of whom
314 shall be the chair of the joint committee on labor and workforce development and 1 of whom
315 shall be the ranking minority member of the senate who is on the joint committee on veterans
316 and federal affairs or the joint committee on economic development and emerging technologies,

317 or the member's designee; the secretary of labor and workforce development, or a designee; the
318 secretary of veterans' services, or a designee; the secretary of housing and economic
319 development, or a designee; and 5 members appointed by the governor, who shall consist of 1
320 member from each of the following organizations: Veterans Business Council, Northeast Veteran
321 Resource Center, Inc., Massachusetts Small Business Development Center, Center for Women
322 and Enterprise, and Veterans, Inc. The speaker of the house of representatives and the president
323 of the senate shall select 2 members from the commission membership as co-chairpersons.

324 (c) The commission shall: (i) examine and report on barriers to employment facing
325 returning veterans; (ii) examine barriers to starting a veteran-owned business or nonprofit; (iii)
326 identify opportunities to promote the development of business enterprises and nonprofit
327 organizations owned and operated by veterans; (iv) examine relationships that can be enhanced
328 between state agencies and private-sector employers to promote private-sector awareness of
329 barriers to veteran employment and the potential benefits of hiring veterans; (v) study the
330 feasibility of state-level veteran career counseling and training options, including coordination
331 with 1-stop career centers and all outreach programs and initiatives relative to veterans'
332 employment services in the commonwealth; (vi) examine outreach programs and initiatives
333 relative to employment services for veterans in the commonwealth and conduct a demographic
334 and geographic analyses of the veteran population who is seeking services through the division
335 of career services; (vii) identify opportunities to maximize revenues aimed at accomplishing the
336 goals in this section, including, but not limited to, the availability of federal grants and matching
337 funds; (viii) develop and implement an action plan to address the needs and deficiencies of
338 underserved geographic locations in need of greater veteran outreach efforts; and (ix) consider
339 any particular challenges that may be faced by female veterans and disabled veterans when
340 related to the objectives of the commission.

341 The examination shall include, but not be limited to: (i) a report on the number of
342 veterans residing in each municipality; (ii) a report on the number of veterans actively seeking
343 employment services in each community; (iii) coordinating with local, state and federal entities
344 to estimate the number of veterans in each community currently unemployed or underemployed;
345 and (iv) a determination of the geographic location of each local veteran employment
346 representative assigned to career centers or other employment outreach locations throughout the
347 commonwealth. The examination shall include an assessment of staffing levels, funding levels
348 and outreach efforts performed by local veteran employment representatives and a projection of
349 underserved geographic locations in need of greater veteran outreach efforts.

350 (d) The commission may hold hearings and invite testimony from experts and the public.
351 The commission shall review and identify best practices learned from similar efforts in other
352 states.

353 (e) The commission shall report to the general court the results of its investigation and
354 study and the action plan as developed in clause (viii) of the first paragraph of subsection (c) and

355 make recommendations together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry out its
356 recommendations by filing such report with the clerks of the senate and the house, not later than
357 January 15, 2015.

358 SECTION 29. (a) There is hereby established the Massachusetts veterans long-term care
359 and housing master plan commission. The commission shall study, evaluate and make
360 recommendations regarding the future needs surrounding housing and residential care demand
361 for veterans, spouses and dependents in the commonwealth. The commission shall also study the
362 feasibility of waiving the homestead fee established in section 38 of chapter 262 of the General
363 Laws for disabled veterans. (b) The commission shall consist of 16 members: the house of
364 representatives and senate co-chairs of the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, or
365 their designees, who shall serve as co-chairs of the commission; the secretary of veterans'
366 services, or a designee; 4 members appointed by the secretary of health and human services, 1 of
367 whom shall be an expert in healthcare delivery systems, 1 of whom shall be an expert in
368 healthcare facilities management, 1 of whom shall be a member of the board of trustees of the
369 Soldiers' Home in Massachusetts and 1 whom shall be a member of the board of trustees of the
370 Soldiers' Home in Holyoke; 1 member appointed by the secretary of administration and finance,
371 who shall be an employee of the division of capital asset management and maintenance; the
372 president of the Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association, or a designee; the
373 executive director of the interagency council on housing and homelessness, or a designee; 1
374 member appointed by the secretary of veterans' services who is a private citizen, not employed
375 by an agency, city, town or group providing services to veterans, and who has extensive
376 knowledge of the federal Veterans Administration; 1 member appointed by the secretary of the
377 executive office for administration and finance who is a private citizen, not employed by an
378 agency, city, town or group providing services to veterans, with extensive knowledge of real
379 estate, construction and development; 2 members from the governor's advisory committee on
380 women veterans; and 2 members appointed by the secretary of veterans' services who are
381 private citizens, not employed by a city, town or group providing services to veterans, and who
382 are combat veterans of conflicts since 2001.

383 (c) The commission shall study and evaluate the emerging changes in veterans care and
384 delivery of services relative to long-term health care and housing with the goal of ensuring all
385 services provided by the state are strategically balanced by region and are in-line with and
386 complimentary to those services provided by the federal government and other service providers.
387 The commission shall study and evaluate the current capital needs for both the Soldiers' Home in
388 Massachusetts and the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke and examine best practices in other states for
389 the purpose of developing a long-term master plan and recommendations relative to long-term
390 capital spending.

391 (d) The commission shall convene the first official meeting not later than January 10,
392 2014. The commission shall file a preliminary report of the study with recommendations for
393 long-term capital not later than April 30, 2014 with the secretary of administration and finance

394 and the house and senate clerks, who shall forward the report to the house and senate committees
395 on ways and means, the house and senate committees on bonding, capital assets and state
396 expenditures and the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs.

397 SECTION 30. The department of veterans' services, in conjunction with the department
398 of revenue, shall study the feasibility and analyze the merits of implementing a sliding scale
399 property tax abatement for veterans and spouses, currently implemented under clause Twenty-
400 second of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General Laws, based upon a percentage of disability as
401 defined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The study shall include, but not be
402 limited to: (i) the methodology of granting such exemption in other states; (2) the utilization of a
403 sliding scale, based upon the percentage of the veteran's disability, in awarding the property tax
404 exemption to veterans and spouses; (iii) the impact on disabled veterans; and (iv) any anticipated
405 monetary cost to the commonwealth or to municipalities that the exemption may cause. The
406 department of veterans' services, in conjunction with the department of revenue, shall submit its
407 findings and legislative recommendations to the clerks of the house of representatives and senate,
408 the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on veterans and
409 federal affairs not later than March 15, 2014.

410 SECTION 31. On the effective date of this act, any person or charitable organization
411 established for an advocacy, benevolent, educational, humane, patriotic, philanthropic, scientific
412 or social welfare purpose on behalf of veterans or the military which intends to solicit
413 contributions from persons within the commonwealth or to have contributions solicited on its
414 behalf by other charitable organizations shall comply with section 19A of chapter 68 of the
415 General Laws not later 90 days after the effective date of this act.