

**SENATE . . . . . No. 2350**

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Senate, June 16, 2016 -- Text of the Senate amendment the House Bill relative to housing, operations, military service, and enrichment (House, No. 4285) (being the text of Senate document numbered 2325, printed as amended).

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court  
(2015-2016)**  
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An Act relative to housing, operations, military service, and enrichment.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 2 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following  
2 section:

3           Section 62. The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument located in Bicentennial Park in  
4 the city of Fall River shall be the official Gold Star Families Memorial Monument of the  
5 commonwealth.

6           SECTION 1A. Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section  
7 71, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the following  
8 section:-

9           Section 71. The board of trustees of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke shall manage and  
10 control the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke and all property, real and personal, of the commonwealth  
11 that is occupied or used by the home. In the management and control of the home, the board of  
12 trustees shall: (i) adopt reasonable rules and regulations governing outpatient treatment at,

13 admission to and hospitalization in the home; and (ii) appoint a superintendent. The  
14 superintendent shall be the administrative head of the home. The superintendent shall, subject to  
15 the approval of the trustees, appoint and may remove a medical director, a treasurer and an  
16 assistant treasurer. The treasurer and assistant treasurer shall devote their full time and attention  
17 to the duties of their office. Section 49 of chapter 31 shall apply to the appointment of the  
18 treasurer and assistant treasurer. The medical director shall have responsibility for the medical,  
19 surgical and outpatient facilities and shall make recommendations to the superintendent  
20 regarding the appointments of all physicians, nurses and other medical staff. The superintendent  
21 shall also appoint and remove such other persons as the superintendent deems necessary for the  
22 proper and efficient operation of the facilities of the home.

23 SECTION 1B. Section 35CC of chapter 10 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is  
24 hereby amended by inserting after the words “action”, in line 8, the following words:- or related  
25 to military service.

26 SECTION 2. Section 16 of chapter 15A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
27 amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:-  
28 There shall be a Public Service Scholarship Program to provide scholarships: (i) to the children  
29 and widowed spouses of Massachusetts police officers, firefighters and correction officers, or  
30 any other public employee who were killed or died from injuries received while in the  
31 performance of their duties, including authorized training duty; (ii) to the children of prisoners of  
32 war or of military or service persons missing in action; and (iii) to the children of veterans whose  
33 service was credited to the commonwealth and who were killed in action or otherwise died as a  
34 result of such service.

35 SECTION 2A. Section 42 of said chapter 15A, as appearing in section 5 of chapter 108  
36 of the acts of 2012, is hereby amended by adding the following subsection:-

37 (c) For the purposes of admission and tuition expenses at a public institution of higher  
38 education, the council shall consider a veteran, as defined in section 7 of chapter 4, a resident of  
39 the commonwealth if the veteran: (i) was honorably discharged from the United States armed  
40 services after at least 1 year of active service, excluding time spent at a military service academy;  
41 and (ii) designates the commonwealth as the veteran's intended domicile, moves to the  
42 commonwealth for the purpose of establishing residency and successfully establishes residency  
43 in the commonwealth within 1 year after matriculation in a public institution of higher education.  
44 If a veteran considered to be a resident of the commonwealth for the purposes of admission and  
45 tuition expenses does not satisfy clauses (i) and (ii), the veteran shall no longer be considered a  
46 resident of the commonwealth and shall be invoiced for the expenses that the veteran would have  
47 paid if the veteran had not been considered a resident of the commonwealth.

48 SECTION 3. Section 26 of chapter 31 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014  
49 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word "honor", in line 25, the following  
50 words:- , distinguished service medal or silver star medal.

51 SECTION 4. Section 59 of chapter 33 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
52 amended by striking out, in line 5, the word "annual" and inserting in place thereof the following  
53 words:- service in the uniformed services, annual.

54 SECTION 5. Subsection (a) of said section 59 of said chapter 33, as so appearing, is  
55 hereby further amended by adding the following sentence:- For the purposes of this section,  
56 "uniformed services" shall have the same meaning as defined in section 13.

57 SECTION 6. Said section 59 of said chapter 33, as so appearing, is hereby further  
58 amended by striking out subsection (d) and inserting in place thereof the following 2  
59 subsections:-

60 (d) An employee of the commonwealth in a reserve component of the armed forces of the  
61 United States who is ordered to service for more than 30 consecutive days shall be paid the  
62 regular base salary as a public employee for each pay period of such military leave of absence,  
63 reduced by any amount received either from the United States or the commonwealth as base pay  
64 for military service performed during the same pay period. No such employee shall lose  
65 seniority or any accrued vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave, compensation time or earned  
66 overtime.

67 (e) An employee of a county, city or town which, by vote of its county commissioners,  
68 city council or inhabitants at a town meeting, has accepted this section or similar provisions of  
69 earlier laws, shall be entitled to the benefits and protections of this section or the benefits of the  
70 accepted earlier law.

71 SECTION 7. Section 5 of chapter 59 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
72 amended by striking out clause Twenty-second D and inserting in place thereof the following  
73 clause:-

74 Twenty-second D, Real estate to the full amount of the taxable valuation of real property  
75 of the surviving spouses of soldiers and sailors, members of the National Guard and veterans  
76 who: (i) during active duty service, suffered an injury or illness documented by the United States  
77 Department of Veterans Affairs or a branch of the armed forces which was a proximate cause of  
78 their death; or (ii) are missing in action with a presumptive finding of death as a result of active

79 duty service as members of the armed forces of the United States; provided, however, that the  
80 real estate shall be occupied by the surviving spouse as the surviving spouse's domicile; and  
81 provided further, that the surviving spouse shall have been domiciled in the commonwealth for  
82 the 5 consecutive years immediately before the date of filing for an exemption pursuant to this  
83 clause or the soldier or sailor, member of the National Guard or veteran was domiciled in the  
84 commonwealth for at least 6 months before entering service.

85 Such exemption shall be available until such time as the surviving spouse dies or  
86 remarries.

87 No real estate shall be exempt under this clause if it was conveyed to the surviving  
88 spouse to evade taxation. The amount of the exemption shall be borne by the commonwealth,  
89 and the state treasurer shall annually reimburse the city or town for the amount of the tax which  
90 otherwise would have been collected for this exemption.

91 SECTION 8. Said section 5 of said chapter 59, as so appearing, is hereby further  
92 amended by inserting after the word "paraplegics", in line 866, the following words:- or have a  
93 disability rating of 100 per cent for service-connected blindness.

94 SECTION 8A. Section 2C of chapter 60 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
95 amended by after the word "penalty", in line 57, the following words:- "; provided, however,  
96 that the municipality shall not arrange for and assign or transfer to a purchaser the right to  
97 receive payments if the municipality receives notice before the transfer that the taxpayer is a  
98 veteran as defined in section 1 of chapter 115".

99 SECTION 8B. Section 2 of chapter 90, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting  
100 after the twenty-first paragraph the following paragraph:-

101           Upon request, the registrar shall issue a Gold Star Family registration plate to the next of  
102 kin of a member of the military who is in possession of a Gold Star Lapel Button and a letter of  
103 approval, each of which has been issued by the United States Department of Defense, shall be  
104 sufficient proof of eligibility for the registrar to furnish a Gold Star Family registration plate to a  
105 next of kin. The possession of a Gold Star Lapel Button shall not be a requirement of eligibility  
106 for persons who have otherwise presented satisfactory evidence of Gold Star family member  
107 status as determined by the registrar.

108           SECTION 9. The first paragraph of section 3 of chapter 115 of the General Laws, as so  
109 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the  
110 following sentence:- The mayor of each city, except Boston, and the board of selectmen of each  
111 town may appoint a veterans' agent who shall serve for a term of up to 3 years and shall be  
112 eligible for reappointment. The veterans' agent may act for the mayor or the board of selectmen,  
113 as applicable, in the disbursement of veterans' benefits by the city or town; provided, however,  
114 that in each town having a part-time veterans' agent, the town clerk shall receive applications and  
115 assist applicants for veterans' benefits and shall submit the applications to the veterans' agent.

116           SECTION 9A. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
117 inserting after the sixth paragraph the following paragraph:-

118           A city or town may incur liability and make expenditures in any fiscal year in excess of  
119 available appropriations for veterans' benefits provided that such expenditures are approved by  
120 the town manager and the finance or advisory committee in a town having a town manager, by  
121 the selectmen and the finance or advisory committee in any other town, by the city manager and  
122 the city council in a city having a city manager or by the mayor and city council in any other city

123 if the appropriation for such purposes in a fiscal year equaled or exceeded the appropriation for  
124 such purposes in the prior fiscal year. Expenditures made under this section shall be certified to  
125 the board of assessors and included in the next annual tax rate. Annually, not later than  
126 September 15, each city or town shall report to the division of local services in the department of  
127 revenue the total amounts appropriated and expended, including any funding or reimbursements  
128 received from the commonwealth, for veterans' benefits in the fiscal year ending on the  
129 preceding June 13.

130 SECTION 10. Chapter 115A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the  
131 following section:-

132 Section 12. (a) There shall be within the department of veterans' services an office of  
133 veterans' homes and housing. The commissioner of veterans' services shall appoint an executive  
134 director of veterans' homes and housing who shall have at least 5 years of management, military  
135 and healthcare experience. The duties of the executive director shall include, but not be limited  
136 to: (i) oversight of the office; and (ii) service as an advisor to the commissioner of veterans'  
137 services on matters relative to veterans' housing. The position of executive director shall be  
138 classified pursuant to section 45 of chapter 30. The executive director may, with the approval of  
139 the commissioner of veterans' services, appoint and remove any employees necessary to carry  
140 out the duties of the office. Unless otherwise provided by law, all such appointments and  
141 removals shall be made pursuant to chapter 31. The office shall: (1) coordinate and oversee  
142 implementation and enforcement of laws, regulations and policies relative to the veterans' homes  
143 and other housing for veterans; and (2) investigate and make recommendations on best practices  
144 for providing housing for veterans. The executive director shall meet with the board of trustees  
145 of the Soldiers' Home in Massachusetts and the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke jointly at least twice

146 per calendar year. The executive director shall have access to all property of the commonwealth  
147 under the oversight of the department of veterans services in order to carry out the duties of the  
148 office; provided, however, that the board of trustees of the Soldiers' Home in Massachusetts or  
149 the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke shall not be subject to the control of the executive director; and  
150 provided, further, that the executive director shall not have control over the day-to-day  
151 operations of the Soldiers' Home in Massachusetts or the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, including  
152 but not limited to personnel and admissions decisions.

153 (b) Annually, not later than November 1, the office shall submit a report to the general  
154 court on the state of the soldiers' homes. The report shall include findings relative to: (i) the  
155 quality of care provided at the homes; (ii) the financial status of the homes; (iii) the uniformity of  
156 programs at the homes; (iv) the capital needs of the homes; and (v) the status of the United States  
157 Department of Veterans Affairs' accreditation, including the efforts necessary to maintain  
158 compliance and the efforts necessary to become fully compliant with the department's standards  
159 at each soldiers' home. The report shall also include an analysis of activities of the office,  
160 including a summary of activities undertaken to implement uniform intake policies and  
161 procedures, patient and resident eligibility requirements and rate-setting functions between the  
162 Soldiers' Home in Massachusetts and the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. The office shall submit  
163 the report to the governor and to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives and the  
164 clerks shall forward the report to the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, the joint  
165 committee on public health and the joint committee on housing.

166 SECTION 11. The third paragraph of section 32 of chapter 121B of the General Laws, as  
167 appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:-  
168 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, in communities where no low-



169 income family housing was developed pursuant to chapter 200 of the acts of 1948, preference in  
170 admission shall be given to veterans for all scattered site housing units acquired by a local  
171 housing authority pursuant to chapter 705 of the acts of 1966.

172 SECTION 12. The fifth paragraph of said section 32 of said chapter 121B, as so  
173 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the second sentence and inserting in place thereof  
174 the following sentence:- In determining the net income for the purpose of computing the rent of a  
175 disabled veteran who is not able to work, a housing authority shall exclude amounts of disability  
176 compensation paid by the United States government for disability occurring in connection with  
177 military service in excess of \$1800; provided, however, that such exclusion shall apply only to  
178 state-aided projects as provided in sections 35 and 36.

179 SECTION 13. Section 39 of said chapter 121B, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
180 striking out the sixth paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

181 Among persons who are eligible and qualified for housing pursuant to this section, a  
182 preference shall be given to veterans.

183 SECTION 14. Section 40 of said chapter 121B, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
184 striking out paragraph (d) and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

185 (d) In all housing for elderly persons of low income and handicapped persons of low  
186 income there shall be a preference in admission for eligible and qualified applicants who are  
187 veterans.

188 SECTION 14A. Section 52A ½ of chapter 149 of the General Laws, as appearing in the  
189 2014 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the first paragraph and inserting in  
190 place thereof the following paragraph:-

191 An employee who is a veteran as defined in clause Forty-third of section 7 of chapter 4 or  
192 is a member of a department of war veterans listed in section 17 of chapter 8 shall be allowed  
193 and granted a leave of absence on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, with pay.

194 SECTION 15. Section 4 of chapter 151B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
195 amended by striking out, in lines 5 and 6, the words "or ancestry" and inserting in place thereof  
196 the following words:- ancestry or status as a veteran.

197 SECTION 16. Section 17 of chapter 260 of the acts of 2006 is hereby repealed.

198 SECTION 17. Chapter 62 of the acts of 2014 is hereby amended by striking out section  
199 29 and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

200 Section 29. (a) There shall be a Massachusetts post-deployment commission to make  
201 recommendations regarding the implementation of a program to support servicemembers  
202 transitioning to civilian life after deployment. The department of veterans' services shall  
203 convene the commission.

204 (b) The commission shall consist of the secretary of health and human services or a  
205 designee from the executive staff of the executive office of health and human services, the  
206 secretary of veterans' services or a designee, who shall serve as chair, 3 members of the senate,  
207 of whom 1 shall be a member of the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, 1 shall be a  
208 member of the joint committee on mental health and substance abuse and 1 shall be appointed by

209 the minority leader of the senate; 3 members of the house of representatives, of whom 1 shall be  
210 a member of the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, 1 shall be a member of the joint  
211 committee on mental health and substance abuse and 1 shall be appointed by the minority leader  
212 of the house of representatives, the adjutant general of the national guard or a designee, the  
213 commissioner of the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission or a designee, the undersecretary  
214 of housing and community development or a designee, the secretary of labor and workforce  
215 development or a designee, the secretary of education or a designee, the president of Brave for  
216 Veterans, Inc., the executive director of Quabbin Mediation, Inc., the president of Soldier On,  
217 Inc. or a designee and 15 persons to be appointed by the governor, of whom 2 shall be members  
218 of the Home Base Program established by the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General  
219 Hospital, 2 shall be veterans' agents as defined in section 1 of chapter 115 of the General Laws,  
220 2 shall be members of the Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention, 2 shall be members of  
221 the Massachusetts Psychological Association, 1 shall be a member of the board of directors of  
222 the Massachusetts Association of Realtors and 5 shall be persons chosen from a list of nominees  
223 submitted by each of the following organizations: the Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide  
224 Prevention, the Massachusetts Psychological Association Inc., Massachusetts Psychiatric  
225 Society, Inc., Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, Inc., Association for Behavioral  
226 Healthcare, Inc., Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association, Massachusetts Women  
227 Veterans' Network, The Red Sox Foundation, Inc. and Massachusetts General Hospital Home  
228 Base Program, the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund, Inc., the United States Department of  
229 Veterans Affairs, The Massachusetts Hospital Association, Inc., the Military Friends Foundation  
230 and The Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, Inc.; provided, however, that 2

231 such members shall be veterans of Operation New Dawn, Operation Enduring Freedom or  
232 Operation Iraqi Freedom.

233 (c) The commission shall perform, and make recommendations pertaining to how best to  
234 operationalize and quantify the following duties which may include, but shall not be limited to:  
235 (i) examining and evaluating the effectiveness of veterans' suicide prevention policies; (ii)  
236 examining and evaluating the effectiveness of resilience training for veterans' personnel; (iii)  
237 developing recommendations on ways in which veterans' support service needs may be promptly  
238 assessed upon return from deployment; (iv) developing recommendations for methods by which  
239 the commonwealth may identify, evaluate and refer servicemembers returning to civilian life  
240 post-deployment for assistance with education, employment, healthcare, housing and other  
241 services; (v) providing recommendations for improving communication between mental health  
242 support services and veterans who may benefit from such services; (vi) developing  
243 recommendations for providing mental health counseling services to treat post-traumatic stress  
244 injuries for post-deployment veterans; and (vii) providing recommendations on improving health  
245 access assistance, including analyzing: (1) barriers prohibiting veterans from receiving coverage  
246 upon their residency in the commonwealth; (2) tools to educate active duty members who intend  
247 to reside in the commonwealth on their ability to acquire health care coverage in the  
248 commonwealth; (3) the resources available to military members to help afford coverage upon  
249 discharge; (4) the fluctuating income of servicemembers upon discharge; (5) the number of  
250 veterans who are discharged and, upon residency in the commonwealth, are without health care  
251 coverage; provided, however, that the council may form a subcommittee to implement this  
252 clause; and (6) the needs of women veterans relative to issues including, but not limited to,  
253 compensation, rehabilitation, outreach, health care, education and other issues facing women

254 veterans in the community. The commission may hold public hearings to assist in the collection  
255 and evaluation of data and testimony.

256 (d) Appointments to the commission shall be made not later than October 1, 2016 and the  
257 commission shall hold its first meeting not later than November 1, 2016. The members of the  
258 commission shall elect a vice chair at the first meeting.

259 (e) The commission shall submit its findings and recommendations, including a detailed  
260 reentry program plan relative to service members who return to civilian life after deployment,  
261 together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into effect, by filing  
262 the same with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the house and senate  
263 committees on ways and means, the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs and the joint  
264 committee on mental health and substance abuse not later than September 17, 2017.

265 SECTION 18. Subsection (b) of section 32 of said chapter 62 is hereby amended by  
266 striking out, in line 1, the figure “16” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 17.

267 SECTION 19. Said subsection (b) of said section 32 of said chapter 62 is hereby further  
268 amended by inserting after the word “veterans”, in line 18, the following words:- ; the president  
269 of Soldier On, Inc. or a designee.

270 SECTION 20. Subsection (d) of said section 32 of said chapter 62 is hereby amended by  
271 striking out, in line 3, the words “April 30, 2015” and inserting in place thereof the following  
272 words:- January 30, 2018.

273 SECTION 21. Surviving spouses of soldiers, sailors, members of the National Guard and  
274 veterans shall be eligible for the exemption established in clause Twenty-second D of section 5

275 of chapter 59 of the General Laws without regard to whether the soldier, sailor, member of the  
276 National Guard or veteran died before or after the effective date of said clause Twenty-second D  
277 of said section 5 of said chapter 59; provided, however that the exemption shall only apply to tax  
278 years beginning on or after January 1, 2017.

279 SECTION 22. (a) Any city, town or district may, subject to the approval of the city, town  
280 or district's legislative body, designate a place on its municipal property tax bills or motor  
281 vehicle excise bills or mail with such bills a separate form whereby taxpayers of the city, town or  
282 district can voluntarily check off, donate and pledge an amount of money which shall increase  
283 the amount already due to a fund under the supervision of the local veterans' agent, the board or  
284 officer in charge of the collection of the municipal charge, fee or fine or the town collector of  
285 taxes.

286 (b) Money in the fund shall be used to provide support for veterans and their dependents  
287 in need of immediate assistance with food, transportation, heat and oil expenses. The city, town  
288 or district's veterans' services department shall (i) establish an application process for veterans  
289 and their dependents to obtain assistance; (ii) establish standards for acceptable documentation of  
290 veteran status or dependent status; and (iii) establish financial eligibility criteria for determining  
291 need and amount of assistance for eligible applicants. The local veterans' agent, the board or  
292 officer in charge of the collection of the municipal charge, fee or fine or the town collector of  
293 taxes, as the supervisor of the fund, shall review each applicant and fairly apply the eligibility  
294 and level-of-need standards.

295 SECTION 23.. The department of veterans' services, in conjunction with the department  
296 of revenue, shall study the feasibility and analyze the merits of implementing a sliding scale

297 property tax abatement for veterans and spouses, under clause Twenty-second of section 5 of  
298 chapter 59 of the General Laws. The sliding scale shall be based upon a percentage of disability  
299 as defined by the United State Department of Veterans Affairs. The study shall include, but not  
300 be limited to: the methodology used in granting such an exemption in other states; (ii) the  
301 utilization of a sliding scale based on the percentage of disability of the veteran for the awarding  
302 of the exemption to veterans and spouses; and (iii) the impact on disabled veterans and any  
303 anticipated monetary cost to the commonwealth or to municipalities that the exemption may  
304 cause. The department of veterans' services, in conjunction with the department of revenue,  
305 shall submit its findings and legislative recommendations to the clerks of the senate and house of  
306 representatives, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on  
307 veterans and federal affairs not later than March 15, 2017.

308 SECTION 24. There shall be a special commission to study the need for accessible  
309 homes for people with mobility limitations, including the elderly, returning veterans with  
310 disabilities, and households that include persons with disabilities.

311 The commission shall consist of 3 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be co-chair of  
312 the commission; 3 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be co-chair of the  
313 commission; the secretary of elder affairs or a designee; the secretary of veterans' services or a  
314 designee; the director of the Massachusetts office on disability or a designee; the secretary of  
315 housing and economic development or a designee; the executive director of the architectural  
316 access board or a designee; the administrator of the board of building regulations and standards  
317 or a designee; the executive director of the Massachusetts Municipal Association or a designee;  
318 the executive director of the Disability Law Center, Inc. or a designee; the executive director of  
319 the Boston Center for Independent Living, Inc. or a designee; the state director of AARP

320 Massachusetts or a designee; the executive director of Citizens' Housing and Planning  
321 Association, Inc. or a designee; the president of the Home Builders Association of  
322 Massachusetts, Inc. or a designee; the president of the Massachusetts Association of Community  
323 Development Corp. or a designee; and 1 person to be appointed by the governor who shall be an  
324 architect with considerable experience in single-family home accessibility issues related to  
325 visitability or basic home design.

326           The commission shall review and evaluate options related to the application of visitability  
327 or basic home design to expand opportunities for people with mobility limitations to visit  
328 families, friends and neighbors. The commission shall examine the need to expand basic  
329 accessibility features in homes to ensure that people with mobility limitations have quality  
330 relationships with their families and friends and the opportunity to fully integrate into their  
331 communities. The commission shall consider the extent to which accomplishing these goals  
332 requires an investment in building a housing supply that is responsive to the needs of people as  
333 they age and that may be adapted to the needs of future generations.

334           The commission shall file a report with the clerks of the senate and house of  
335 representatives not later than 180 days after it convenes. The report shall: (i) identify studies with  
336 demographic analyses that consider the proportion of present and future households that have a  
337 member with a mobility limitation; (ii) examine existing housing and the design and rate of new  
338 housing being built that would allow a person with a mobility limitation to visit or otherwise be  
339 accommodated temporarily or for a longer period of time; (iii) consider the total number of  
340 family members who may likely occupy a single housing unit over its functionally useful life and  
341 the likelihood that, during such time, someone with a mobility limitation would live there and  
342 would be better accommodated if the home had features related to visitability or basic home



343 design; and (iv) by reviewing other studies and conducting such other analyses as the  
344 commission in its discretion believes may be relevant to its determination of the need to expand  
345 the number of visitable homes in the commonwealth.

346 The commission report shall examine strategies to increase public awareness of: (i) the  
347 need for visitable homes; (ii) the options that would be effective in expanding the number of  
348 visitable homes that are available to meet this need in communities; and (iii) the costs and  
349 benefits of a successful program that accomplishes these ends.

350 The commission report shall review the policies underlying existing publicly-financed  
351 and publicly-funded housing development programs in state government and in local  
352 jurisdictions and determine the extent to which there are policies that have been adopted or are  
353 under consideration involving visitability or basic home design as a minimum accessibility  
354 standard and consider the reasonable options for extending the coverage of such policies to all  
355 new housing produced in the commonwealth.

356 The commission report shall consider the policy changes necessary to meet the need for  
357 visitable homes by 2040 or such other year as the commission may determine to be more  
358 appropriate during its review. It shall formulate its recommendations taking into account the best  
359 practices and experiences in other jurisdictions, including a comparison of the effectiveness of  
360 incentives versus adoption of building code standards that are central to visitability or basic  
361 home design.

362 Appointments shall be made not later than 60 days after the effective date of this section.  
363 The chairs shall meet with the commission not later than 90 days after the effective date of this  
364 section and shall meet not less than bimonthly thereafter.

365           The commission may hold regular public meetings, fact-finding hearings and other public  
366 forums as it considers necessary. Members shall not receive compensation for their services.

367           The commission shall report on its recommendations, including drafts of legislation  
368 necessary to carry those recommendations into effect, by filing the same with the senate  
369 president, the speaker of the house and the governor.

370           SECTION 25. The office of veterans' homes and housing, in consultation with the  
371 department of revenue, shall study the feasibility of offering a tax rebate to a landlord who leases  
372 a dwelling unit to a veteran, as defined in section 7 of chapter 4 of the General Laws, or a  
373 dependent of a veteran who receives veterans' benefits pursuant to chapter 115 of the General  
374 Laws at a rate below fair market value. The office shall submit its findings and legislative  
375 recommendations to the clerks of the house and senate, the house and senate committees on ways  
376 and means and the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs not later than March 15, 2017.