

SENATE No. 2826

Senate, June 13, 2024 -- Text of the Senate amendment to the House Bill honoring, empowering, and recognizing our servicemembers and veterans (House, No. 4671) (being the text of Senate, No. 2817, printed as amended)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)

1 SECTION 1. Section 34 of chapter 2 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 2, the word “department” and
3 inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section
5 15ZZZZZZ the following 2 sections:-

6 Section. 15AAAAAAA. The governor shall set apart May 22 as United States Merchant
7 Marine Day in recognition of the establishment of the United States Merchant Marine on June
8 12, 1775 and shall annually issue a proclamation recommend that the day be observed in an
9 appropriate manner by the people.

10 Section 15BBBBBBB. The governor shall annually set apart December 20 as United
11 States Space Force Day, in recognition of the Space Force’s distinguished history and
12 spacefaring service, and recommend that the day be observed in an appropriate manner by the
13 people.

14 SECTION 3. Section 41 of said chapter 6, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is
15 hereby amended by striking out, in lines 47 and 94, the word “department” and inserting in place
16 thereof, in each instance, the following words:- executive office.

17 SECTION 4. Section 219 of said chapter 6, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
18 striking out, in line 8, the figure “21” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 23.

19 SECTION 5. Said section 219 of said chapter 6, as so appearing, is hereby further
20 amended by inserting after the word “chair”, in line 10, the following words:- ; the secretary of
21 veterans' services or a designee.

22 SECTION 6. Said section 219 of said chapter 6, as so appearing, is hereby further
23 amended by inserting after the word “leader”, in line 18, the second time it appears, the
24 following words:- ; 1 person appointed by the governor representing a veterans organization in
25 the commonwealth.

26 SECTION 7. Subsection (d) of section 16DD of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as so
27 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 29, the second time it appears, the word
28 “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

29 SECTION 8. Section 105 of said chapter 6A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
30 striking out, in line 1, the words “a department” and inserting in place thereof the following
31 words:- an executive office.

32 SECTION 9. Section 4G of chapter 7 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
33 amended by striking out, in lines 7 and 8, the words “the department of veterans’ services,”.

34 SECTION 10. Section 61 of said chapter 7 is hereby amended by striking out, in lines
35 124 and 125, as so appearing, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following
36 words:- executive office.

37 SECTION 11. Section 78 of chapter 10 of the General Laws is hereby amended by
38 inserting after the word "Reserve", in line 11, as so appearing, the following words:- , United
39 States Space Force.

40 SECTION 12. Section 17 of chapter 11 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
41 amended by striking out, in line 21, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the
42 following words:- executive office.

43 SECTION 13. Section 1G of chapter 15 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
44 amended by inserting after the word “students”, in line 86, the following words:- , including
45 military-connected students.

46 SECTION 14. Chapter 15D of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
47 section 7 the following section:-

48 Section 7A. For the purposes of this section, “military installation” shall mean a base,
49 camp, post, station, yard, center or other activity under the jurisdiction of the secretary of a
50 United States military department or, in the case of an activity in a foreign country, under the
51 operational control of the secretary of a United States military department or the United States
52 Secretary of Defense, regardless of the duration of operational control.

53 Notwithstanding any general or special law, rule or regulation to the contrary, sections 6
54 and 7 shall not apply to a child care provider on a military installation or a facility licensed or

55 certified as a family child care provider by a branch of the United States Department of Defense
56 or by the United States Coast Guard.

57 SECTION 15. Section 1 of chapter 15E of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
58 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 6, the word “sections” and inserting
59 in place thereof the following word:- chapters.

60 SECTION 16. Said section 1 of said chapter 15E, as so appearing, is hereby further
61 amended by inserting after the word “Force”, in line 69, the following words:- , Space Force.

62 SECTION 17. Section 2EEEEEE of chapter 29 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
63 hereby amended by striking out, in line 14, the words “department of veterans” and inserting in
64 place thereof the following words:- executive office of veterans’.

65 SECTION 18. Section 49 of chapter 31 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
66 amended by striking out, in lines 14 and 15, the words “home in the city of Chelsea” and
67 inserting in place thereof the following word:- homes.

68 SECTION 19. Paragraph (h) of subdivision (1) of section 4 of chapter 32 of the General
69 Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the fourth subparagraph and inserting
70 in place thereof the following subparagraph:-

71 Notwithstanding the provisions of this chapter or any other general or special law, rule or
72 regulation to the contrary, a member in service of a retirement system as defined in section 1
73 shall be provided written notice by the retirement board upon entry into service that if they
74 qualify as a veteran who served in the armed forces of the United States, they shall be entitled to
75 credit for active service in the armed services of the United States; provided, however, that such

76 active service shall not be credited until such member, prior to or within 1 year of vesting
77 pursuant to this chapter, has paid into the annuity savings fund of such system, in 1 sum or in
78 installments, upon such terms and conditions as the board may prescribe, makeup payments, for
79 each year of creditable service sought, of an amount equal to 10 per cent of the regular annual
80 compensation of the member when said member entered the retirement system; provided further,
81 that such creditable service shall not be construed to include service for more than 4 years; and
82 provided further, that such creditable service shall not be allowed for any period of active service
83 for which said veteran has received credit pursuant to this paragraph. This paragraph shall apply
84 to national guard and active reserve personnel, both former and present. Creditable service time,
85 both enlisted and commissioned, may be applied toward retirement on a ratio of 5 years of
86 national guard service or 5 years of active reserve service substitutable for each year of active
87 service. National guard and active reserve personnel shall not be precluded from making said
88 purchase if they qualify as a veteran after vesting or if they reach the maximum of 4 years of
89 eligible service purchase after vesting and qualifying as a veteran; provided, however, that they
90 enter into a purchase agreement within 5 years of the last occurring event.

91 SECTION 20. Section 15 of chapter 33 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
92 amended by adding the following paragraph:-

93 (j) There shall be a military spouse liaison appointed by the adjutant general who shall
94 conduct outreach to and advocate on behalf of military spouses residing in the commonwealth.
95 The duties of the military spouse liaison shall include, but not be limited to: (i) providing
96 assistance and information to military spouses seeking professional licenses and credentials or
97 other employment the commonwealth; (ii) coordinating research on issues facing military
98 spouses; (iii) creating informational materials to assist military spouses and their families; (iv)

99 providing recommendations to assist spouses in accessing high quality child care; (v) developing
100 resources in coordination with military installations to increase access to high quality child care
101 for military families; and (vi) assisting military spouses with finding employment in relevant
102 sectors.

103 SECTION 21. Said chapter 33 is hereby further amended by striking out section 59, as
104 so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

105 Section 59. (a) An employee of the commonwealth or another state in the service of the
106 armed forces of the commonwealth or a reserve component of the armed forces of the United
107 States based in the commonwealth shall be entitled to receive pay without loss of ordinary
108 remuneration as a public employee during service in the uniformed services, annual training
109 under section 60 or drills and parades under section 61, or for an employee in the service of the
110 armed forces of another state, annual training, drills or parades under a corresponding law of that
111 state, not exceeding 40 days in any federal fiscal year, and shall not lose any seniority or any
112 accrued vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave, compensation time or earned overtime. For
113 the purposes of this section, "uniformed services" shall have the same meaning as in section 13.
114 For the purposes of this subsection, "day" shall mean any 24-hour period regardless of calendar
115 day.

116 (b) An employee of the commonwealth in the service of the armed forces of the
117 commonwealth under sections 38, 40 or 41, or in the service of the armed forces of another state
118 under a corresponding law of that state, shall be entitled to receive pay without loss of ordinary
119 remuneration as a public employee and shall not lose any seniority or any accrued vacation
120 leave, sick leave, personal leave, compensation time or earned overtime during the first 30

121 consecutive days of any mission; provided, however, that after the 30-day period, the ordinary
122 remuneration of such an employee shall be reduced by any amount received from the United
123 States, the commonwealth or another state as base pay for military service performed during the
124 same pay period and there shall be no loss of any seniority or any accrued vacation leave, sick
125 leave, personal leave, compensation time or earned overtime. National guard duty performed
126 under Title 32 of the United States Code shall not be deemed service in the armed forces of the
127 commonwealth under sections 38, 40 or 41 or service in the armed forces of another state under
128 the corresponding law of that state for the purposes of this section.

129 (c) An employee of the commonwealth in the armed forces of the commonwealth or of
130 another state performing duty under Titles 10 or 32 of the United States Code shall be paid their
131 regular base salary as a public employee for each pay period of such military leave of absence,
132 reduced by any amount received from the United States, the commonwealth or another state as
133 base pay for military service performed during the same pay period and such employee shall not
134 lose any seniority or any accrued vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave, compensation time
135 or earned overtime.

136 (d) An employee of the commonwealth in a reserve component of the armed forces of the
137 United States who is ordered to service for more than 30 consecutive days shall be paid their
138 regular base salary as a public employee for each pay period of such military leave of absence,
139 reduced by any amount received from the United States, the commonwealth or another state as
140 base pay for military service performed during the same pay period. No such employee shall lose
141 any seniority or accrued vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave, compensation time or earned
142 overtime.

143 (e) An employee of a county, city or town which, by vote of its legislative body, has
144 accepted this section or similar provisions of earlier laws, shall be entitled to the benefits and
145 protections of this section or the benefits of the accepted earlier law.

146 (f) For the purposes of this section, "base pay for military service" shall not include any
147 housing, incentive, bonus, skills pay, allowance or other stipend or benefit paid to the employee
148 for the employee's military service.

149 SECTION 22. Subsection (b) of article 43 of chapter 33A of the General Laws, as so
150 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out paragraph (2) and inserting in place thereof the
151 following paragraph:-

152 (2) A person charged with an offense shall not be liable to be punished under article 15 if
153 the Massachusetts National Guard knew, or reasonably should have known, of the offense more
154 than 2 years before the imposition of punishment.

155 SECTION 23. Section 5 of chapter 59 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
156 amended by inserting after clause Twenty-second H the following 2 clauses:-

157 Twenty-second I. In a city or town that accepts this clause and is certified by the
158 commissioner of revenue to be assessing all property at full and fair cash valuation, an abatement
159 granted pursuant clause Twenty-second, Twenty-second A, Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C,
160 Twenty-second E or Twenty-second F shall be increased annually by an amount equal to the
161 increase in the cost of living as determined by the Consumer Price Index for such year. The
162 department of revenue shall annually inform each city or town that accepts this clause of the
163 amount of such increase.

164 Twenty-second J. In a city or town that accepts this clause and is certified by the
165 commissioner of revenue to be assessing all property at full and fair cash valuation, a taxpayer
166 who otherwise qualifies for an exemption pursuant to clause Twenty-second, Twenty-second A,
167 Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C, Twenty-second E or Twenty-second F shall be granted an
168 additional exemption the amount of which shall not exceed 100 per cent of the exemption for
169 which the taxpayer qualifies, as may be determined by the legislative body of the city or town,
170 subject to its charter, not later than the beginning of the fiscal year to which the additional
171 exemption shall commence; provided, however, that the additional exemption shall be uniform
172 for all taxpayers who qualify for an exemption under said clause Twenty-second, Twenty-second
173 A, Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C, Twenty-second E or Twenty-second F. Once accepted,
174 the amount of the exemption shall continue until amended by the legislative body of the city or
175 town. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary, the exemption shall be in
176 addition to any exemption allowable pursuant to this section; provided, however, the taxable
177 valuation of the property receiving an exemption pursuant to this clause, after all applicable
178 exemptions, shall not be reduced below 10 per cent of its full and fair cash valuation, except
179 through the applicability of clause Eighteenth. Acceptance of this clause by a city or town shall
180 not increase the amount that the city or town otherwise would have been reimbursed by the
181 commonwealth pursuant to the clause. The additional exemption contained within this clause
182 shall not be implemented in any year in which the city or town has also accepted section 5C1/2.

183 SECTION 24. Section 5N of said chapter 59, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
184 striking out, in lines 16 and 43, the figure \$1,500 and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,
185 the following figure:- \$2,000.

186 SECTION 25. Subsection (u) of section 6 of chapter 62 of the General Laws, as so
187 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 1113 and 1130, the figure “\$2,000” and
188 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following figure:- \$2,500.

189 SECTION 26. Said subsection (u) of said section 6 of said chapter 62, as so appearing, is
190 hereby further amended by striking out, in line 1119, the words “the day” and inserting in place
191 thereof the following words:- six months after.

192 SECTION 27. Section 38GG of chapter 63 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
193 hereby amended by striking out, in lines 8 and 24, the figure “\$2,000” and inserting in place
194 thereof, in each instance, the following figure:- \$2,500.

195 SECTION 28. Said section 38GG of said chapter 63, as so appearing, is hereby further
196 amended by striking out, in line 13, the words “the day” and inserting in place thereof the
197 following words:- six months after.

198 SECTION 29. Section 6 of chapter 64H of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
199 amended by striking out subsection (u) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

200 (u) Sale of a motor vehicle purchased by and for the use of a person who has suffered
201 loss, or permanent loss of use, of both legs or both arms or 1 leg and 1 arm or by and for the use
202 of a veteran who has been determined to be permanently disabled by the medical advisory board
203 established under section 8C of chapter 90 and has been issued a plate displaying the words
204 “Disabled Veteran” or a Purple Heart distinctive registration plate pursuant to section 2J of said
205 chapter 90; provided, however, that this exemption shall apply to 1 motor vehicle owned and
206 registered only for the personal, noncommercial use of such person. A person who is otherwise

207 eligible for this exemption and who was previously issued a Purple Heart distinctive registration
208 plate shall not be required to forfeit such plate to remain eligible for this exemption.

209 SECTION 30. Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
210 following section:-

211 Section 38. (a) For the purposes of this section, “military-connected student” shall mean a
212 student who is an unemancipated person whose parent or guardian: (i) is a current or reserve
213 member of the United States Army, United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, United
214 States Coast Guard, United States Space Force, Army Nurse Corps, Navy Nurse Corps, United
215 States Air Force, Air National Guard or Army National Guard; or (ii) a member of a military or
216 reserve force under clause (i) who was killed in the line of duty.

217 (b) A school district shall provide appropriate support services to a military-connected
218 student if their parent or guardian is called or ordered to active duty pursuant to Title 10 or 32 of
219 the United States Code and said parent or guardian notifies the district of such active duty or a
220 student’s parent or guardian is a member of a military or reserve force and was killed in the line
221 of duty. The school district shall provide such student with informational materials and resources
222 and access to a: (i) certified school counselor; (ii) certified school psychologist; or (iii) school
223 social worker.

224 (c) The department shall coordinate with the military division of the commonwealth to
225 carry out subsection (b), including posting information about military family resources to the
226 department’s website and providing informational materials for use by school districts to inform
227 parents and guardians of the supports available under said subsection (b).

228 (d) A school district may notify a teacher of the enrollment of a military-connected
229 student at the request of the military-connected student’s parent or guardian to provide the
230 teacher with the opportunity to monitor a military-connected student’s level of academic
231 engagement and provide support as needed.

232 SECTION 31. Section 4 of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
233 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 32, the word “department”, the
234 second time it appears, and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

235 SECTION 32. Said section 4 of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is hereby further
236 amended by striking out, in line 39, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the
237 following words:- executive office.

238 SECTION 33. Section 2 of chapter 90 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking
239 out, in lines 172 to 186, inclusive, as so appearing, the words “pleasure passenger vehicles
240 owned by veterans who, according to the records of the United States Veterans’ Administration,
241 has been determined to have a service-connected disability rating of 60 per cent or greater and by
242 reason of service in the armed forces of the United States have suffered loss or permanent loss of
243 use of one or both feet; or loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; or permanent
244 impairment of vision of both eyes of the following status: central visual acuity of 20/200 or less
245 in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a
246 field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter
247 of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees in the better eye, or
248 any other disability or handicap of such veterans which may be determined by the medical
249 advisory board as established by section eight C, and”.

250 SECTION 34. The seventh paragraph of said section 2 of said chapter 90, as so
251 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the third and fourth sentences.

252 SECTION 35. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking
253 out, in lines 246 to 258, inclusive, as so appearing, the words “and the words “Disabled Veteran”
254 for a pleasure passenger vehicle or a pick-up truck owned or leased by and used by a veteran
255 who, according to the records of the United States Veterans’ Administration, by reason of service
256 in the armed forces of the United States has suffered loss or permanent loss of use of one or both
257 feet; or loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; or permanent impairment of vision of
258 both eyes of the following status: central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with
259 corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which
260 the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field
261 subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye, or any other disability
262 or handicap”.

263 SECTION 36. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking out
264 the twelfth paragraph, as so appearing.

265 SECTION 37. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking out
266 the fifteenth to seventeenth paragraphs, inclusive, as so appearing.

267 SECTION 38. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking out
268 the nineteenth to twenty-second paragraphs, inclusive, as so appearing.

269 SECTION 39. Said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 2I the
270 following section:-

271 Section 2J. (a) The registrar shall design and maintain a series of distinct and individual
272 license plates recognizing those who have served in the military and for those who deserve
273 special recognition relating to or deriving from military service as provided herein.

274 (b) An individual that meets the definition of a veteran under clause forty-third of section
275 7 of chapter 4 or section 1 of chapter 115 or who is eligible for annuity provided under section
276 6C of said chapter 115, upon presentation of satisfactory evidence of such status as determined
277 by the registrar, shall be eligible for and entitled to a veteran license plate bearing the words
278 "VETERAN".

279 (c) The series of distinct and individual license plates recognizing those who have served
280 in the military and for those who deserve special recognition relating to or deriving from military
281 service shall include license plates for:

282 (i) veterans ranked with a disability rating of not less than 60 per cent by the United
283 States Department of Veterans Affairs, including those who have suffered the loss of a limb,
284 permanent visual acuity loss of 20/200 in an eye, or are otherwise determined to be disabled or
285 handicapped by the medical advisory board established in section 8C;

286 (ii) veterans who have been captured and incarcerated by foreign forces in conflict or
287 held as prisoners of war;

288 (iii) veterans who are members of the Legion of Valor of the United States of America
289 Inc.;

290 (iv) veterans awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor shall be entitled to a distinctive
291 plate recognizing that status, including, subject to availability, the use of the initials of the award
292 recipient followed by CMH signifying their award.

293 (v) veterans awarded the Purple Heart medal shall be entitled to a distinctive plate
294 indicating that status which shall include the words “COMBAT WOUNDED”;

295 (vi) survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor shall be entitled to a distinctive plate
296 reflecting that status and bearing the word “VETERAN”;

297 (vii) residents of the commonwealth serving in any branch of the national guard shall be
298 entitled to a distinctive plate reflecting that status;

299 (viii) residents of the commonwealth awarded the medal of liberty pursuant to section
300 67A of chapter 33 shall be entitled to a distinctive plate reflecting that status; and

301 (ix) next of kin of a member of the armed forces, in possession of a Gold Star Lapel
302 Button under the regulations of the United States Secretary of Defense, shall be entitled to a
303 Gold Star Family distinctive plate; provided, however, that said button shall not be an eligibility
304 requirement for those who have presented other satisfactory evidence of their status, as
305 determined by the registrar.

306 (d) A veteran who has served in the armed forces and is entitled to a veteran license plate
307 shall also be entitled to the issuance of a decal or emblem denoting their branch of service.
308 Residents of the commonwealth who are veterans and who identify as female shall be entitled to
309 a distinctive decal or emblem, which the registry of motor vehicles shall design and issue.

310 (e) The following individuals shall be entitled to a distinctive plate, decal or emblem
311 denoting their award status:

312 (i) owners of private vehicles awarded 1 of the following decorations for valor or
313 gallantry: (i) the Silver Star; (ii) the Bronze Star; (iii) the Distinguished Flying Cross; (iv) the
314 Distinguished Service Cross; (v) the Navy Cross; (vi) the Air Force Cross; or (vii) any other
315 similar award designated by the secretary of veterans' services; and

316 (ii) residents of the commonwealth who qualify as a Gold Star parent, child, sibling,
317 grandchild or spouse.

318 (f) Veterans entitled to a distinctive plate shall be entitled to have a distinctive emblem or
319 decal reflecting service in Operation Enduring Freedom or the receipt of the Iraq Campaign
320 Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, a Persian Gulf Campaign Ribbon, the Armed Forces
321 Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal,
322 the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Kosovo
323 Campaign Medal or the Prisoner of War Medal.

324 (g) A person who is widowed by a veteran who received any special recognition or status
325 pursuant to this section shall not be required to forfeit their distinctive license plate, decal or
326 emblem unless they cancel or fail to renew the registration for said license plate. If a veteran was
327 eligible for special recognition or status under this section but did not apply for such special
328 recognition or status before their death, the person widowed by said deceased veteran may apply
329 on behalf of the deceased veteran for special recognition or status pursuant to this section.

330 (h) Special recognition or status pursuant to this section shall entitle the recipient to not
331 more than 1 distinctive license plate, decal or emblem; provided, however, that such recipient

332 may opt to have the distinctive plate, decal or emblem issued in a form suitable for use on a
333 motorcycle.

334 (i) Any plate to which an individual is entitled pursuant to this section shall be issued
335 without fee other than the established registration fee for private passenger motor vehicles and
336 motorcycles. State-operated veterans' homes shall be reimbursed annually from the General
337 Fund for any loss of revenue for any license plate, decal or emblem provided free of charge
338 pursuant to this section.

339 SECTION 40. Section 244 of chapter 111 of the General Laws, as inserted by section 14
340 of chapter 154 of the acts of 2022, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 2, 28, the second
341 time it appears, 35 and 38, the word "commissioner" and inserting in place thereof, in each
342 instance, the following word:- secretary.

343 SECTION 41. Said section 244 of said chapter 111, as so inserted, is hereby further
344 amended by striking out, in line 43, the word "department" and inserting in place thereof the
345 following words:- executive office.

346 SECTION 42. Section 1 of chapter 115 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
347 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the definition of "Dependent" and inserting
348 in place thereof the following definition:-

349 "Dependent", the spouse, widowed person, child or parent of a veteran, including any
350 person who stood in the relationship of a parent to such veteran for the 5 years preceding the
351 commencement of the veteran's wartime service; provided, however, that no child of a veteran
352 who is more than 18 years of age shall be deemed a dependent, unless the child meets the criteria
353 established for emancipation pursuant to section 28 of chapter 208 or section 9 of chapter 209C

354 or unless the child is mentally or physically unable to support themselves after attaining the age
355 of 23.

356 SECTION 43. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
357 amended by striking out, in line 25, the word “his”, each time it appears, and inserting in place
358 thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the applicant’s.

359 SECTION 44. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
360 amended by striking out, in line 26, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof the following
361 words:- the applicant.

362 SECTION 45. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
363 amended by striking out the definition of “Veteran” and inserting in place thereof the following
364 definition:-

365 “Veteran”, a person who: (a) is a veteran as defined in clause Forty-third of section 7 of
366 chapter 4; (b) served on active duty in the armed forces for not less than 90 days and whose last
367 discharge or release was under conditions other than dishonorable; (c) served on active duty,
368 including active duty solely for training purposes, in the armed forces and was awarded a
369 service-connected disability or who died in such service under conditions other than
370 dishonorable; (d) served in the national guard or as a reservist in any branch of the United States
371 Armed Forces, including active duty solely for training purposes, and was awarded a service-
372 connected disability or who died in such service under conditions other than dishonorable; or (e)
373 is determined to be a veteran according to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;
374 provided, however, that in any case, the service of such person qualified under clause (a) through
375 clause (e), inclusive, was entered into or served in the commonwealth or such person has resided

376 in the commonwealth for not less than 1 day, except for the purpose of determining the
377 residential eligibility of a deceased veteran's dependents.

378 SECTION 46. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
379 amended by striking out, in lines 54 and 55, the words "as defined in clause Forty-third of
380 section seven of chapter four,".

381 SECTION 47. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
382 striking out, in lines 1 and 2, the words "as defined in clause Forty-third of section seven of
383 chapter four".

384 SECTION 48. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
385 amended by striking out, in lines 7 and 20, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof, in each
386 instance, the following word:- the secretary's.

387 SECTION 49. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
388 amended by striking out, in lines 8, 12, 20, 66, 82, 103, 123, 131, 139 and 150, the word "He"
389 and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:-The secretary.

390 SECTION 50. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
391 amended by striking out, in lines 12, 63, 71, 89, 98, 113, 118 and 119, the word "him" and
392 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the secretary.

393 SECTION 51. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
394 amended by striking out, in lines 13, 14, 61, 118, 125, 129, 134 and 142, the word "he" and
395 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the secretary.

396 SECTION 52. The third paragraph of said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing,
397 is hereby amended by inserting after the third sentence the following 3 sentences:- Any claimant
398 aggrieved by a decision of a veterans' agent regarding veterans benefits or by the failure of a city
399 or town to render adequate veterans' benefits or to take, approve or deny an application for
400 veterans' benefits within 45 days of receiving such application or the claimant requesting to
401 apply for benefits or any person aggrieved by the termination or reduction of such benefits shall
402 have the right to appeal to the secretary. An appeal shall be filed with the secretary within 90
403 days of the claimant's receipt of a written adverse notice. An informal administrative hearing of
404 such appeal shall be conducted to review the facts and circumstances giving rise to the appeal.
405 The secretary shall issue a decision on the appeal within 90 days after the informal
406 administrative hearing has closed.

407 SECTION 53. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
408 amended by striking out, in line 39, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof the following
409 words:- the person's.

410 SECTION 54. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
411 amended by striking out, in line 45, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof the following
412 words:- a party's.

413 SECTION 55. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
414 amended by striking out the sixth paragraph.

415 SECTION 56. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
416 amended by striking out, in line 82, the words "him or by his" and inserting in place thereof the
417 following words:- the secretary or the secretary's.

418 SECTION 57. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
419 amended by striking out, in line 98, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
420 words:- the applicant’s.

421 SECTION 58. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
422 amended by striking out, in lines 153 and 156, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in
423 each instance, the following word:- a.

424 SECTION 59. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
425 amended by striking out, in line 155, the word “chairman” and inserting in place thereof the
426 following word:- chair.

427 SECTION 60. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
428 amended by adding the following 3 paragraphs:-

429 The secretary shall provide, subject to appropriation, a medical assistance benefit in
430 addition to the other benefits provided in this chapter. A recipient of the medical assistance
431 benefit shall, where applicable, make use of private, state or federally-funded resources before
432 seeking aid under this paragraph. The medical assistance benefit shall include, but not be limited
433 to, covering the cost of necessary medical visits, procedures, prescriptions and other such
434 treatment as the secretary shall determine through regulations. The secretary shall, by regulation
435 or otherwise, make provision to keep the program efficient and economical.

436 The secretary shall provide, subject to appropriation, a behavioral health assistance
437 benefit in addition to the other benefits provided in this chapter. A recipient of the behavioral
438 health assistance benefit shall, where applicable, make use of private, state or federally-funded
439 resources before seeking aid under this paragraph. The behavioral health assistance benefit shall

440 include, but not be limited to, coverage for the cost of those necessary outpatient behavioral
441 health assessments, evaluations, visits, prescriptions and other such treatment as the secretary
442 shall determine through regulations. The secretary shall, by regulation or otherwise, make
443 provision to keep the program efficient and economical.

444 The secretary shall provide, subject to appropriation, a dental assistance benefit in
445 addition to the other benefits provided in this chapter. A recipient of the dental assistance benefit
446 shall, where applicable, make use of private, state or federally-funded resources before seeking
447 aid under this paragraph. The dental assistance benefit shall include, but not be limited to,
448 coverage for the cost of those necessary medical visits, procedures, prescriptions and other such
449 treatment as the secretary shall determine through regulations. The secretary shall, by regulation
450 or otherwise, make provision to keep the program efficient and economical.

451 SECTION 61. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
452 amended by adding the following paragraph:-

453 Annually, not later than November 1, the secretary shall report on the activities of the
454 office and data collected related to veterans, including, but not limited to: (i) the number of
455 recipients of state veteran benefits and applicants for benefits, delineated by municipality and
456 demographic; (ii) a breakdown on the outcome of benefit appeal decisions pursuant to this
457 section; (iii) a summary of the office's outreach to veterans on the availability of and process for
458 applying for benefits; (iv) demographic and regional information available on the veteran
459 population in the commonwealth; (v) directives in effect; and (vi) any legislative
460 recommendations necessary to better serve veterans and their families in the commonwealth. The
461 office shall publicly post the report on the office's website and submit the report to the joint

462 committee on veterans and federal affairs, the clerks of the senate and house of representatives
463 and the senate and house committees on ways and means.

464 SECTION 62. Section 2B of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
465 striking out, in lines 7 and 8, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the
466 following word:- a.

467 SECTION 63. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
468 striking out, in line 17, the word “his”.

469 SECTION 64. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
470 amended by striking out, in line 18, the words “in behalf of a civil war” and inserting in place
471 thereof the following words:- on behalf of a.

472 SECTION 65. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
473 amended by striking out, in lines 18 and 19, the words “his wife or widow” and inserting in place
474 thereof the following words:- a veteran’s spouse or widowed person.

475 SECTION 66. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
476 amended by striking out, in line 20, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following
477 words:- the secretary.

478 SECTION 67. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
479 amended by striking out, in line 20, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
480 words:- the agent’s.

481 SECTION 68. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
482 amended by striking out, in line 24, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof the following
483 words:- the veteran.

484 SECTION 69. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
485 amended by striking out, in line 24, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
486 words:- the veteran’s.

487 SECTION 70. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
488 amended by striking out, in lines 25 and 27, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof, in
489 each instance, the following words:- the agent.

490 SECTION 71. Section 4 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
491 striking out, in lines 4, 5, 8 and 20, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each
492 instance, the following words:- the applicants.

493 SECTION 72. Said section 4 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
494 amended by striking out, in line 14, the word “widow” and inserting in place thereof the
495 following words:- widowed person.

496 SECTION 73. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
497 striking out, in lines 2 and 55, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the
498 following words:- the veteran.

499 SECTION 74. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
500 amended by striking out, in lines 3 to 10, inclusive, the words “unless he has actually resided
501 within the commonwealth for 1 day preceding the date of his application for such benefits, nor to

502 any dependent of a veteran unless he has actually resided within the commonwealth continuously
503 for three years next preceding the date of his application for such benefits, nor unless the veteran
504 of whom he is a dependent has actually resided within the commonwealth continuously for three
505 years next preceding the date of such dependent's application for such benefits" and inserting in
506 place thereof the following words:- or to a dependent of a veteran unless the veteran or the
507 dependent has actually resided within the commonwealth for not less than 1 day preceding the
508 date of the application for such benefits.

509 SECTION 75. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
510 amended by striking out, in lines 16, 25, 26, 45, 59, 62, 63, 65 and 66, the word "his" and
511 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- their.

512 SECTION 76. The second paragraph of said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so
513 appearing, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- A city or town may, upon
514 recommendation of the veterans' agent and with written authorization from the veteran or
515 dependent, disburse veterans' benefits under this section by direct deposit to a financial
516 institution of the veteran or dependent's choice or by mail.

517 SECTION 77. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
518 amended by striking out, in lines 22 and 74, the word "him" and inserting in place thereof, in
519 each instance, the following word:- them.

520 SECTION 78. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
521 amended by striking out, in line 27, the word "him" and inserting in place thereof the following
522 words:- the applicant.

523 SECTION 79. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
524 amended by striking out, in line 24, the word “himself” and inserting in place thereof the
525 following word:- themselves.

526 SECTION 80. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
527 amended by striking out in lines 39, 43, 51, 54, 102 and 103, the word “his” and inserting in
528 place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the veteran’s.

529 SECTION 81. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
530 amended by striking out, in line 42, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
531 words:- the secretary’s.

532 SECTION 82. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
533 amended by striking out, in line 57, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following
534 words:- the veteran.

535 SECTION 83. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
536 amended by striking out, in line 59, the word “He” and inserting in place thereof the following
537 word:- They.

538 SECTION 84. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
539 amended by striking out, in line 61, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof the following
540 word:- they.

541 SECTION 85. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
542 amended by striking out, in line 92, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
543 words:- the veterans’ agent’s.

544 SECTION 86. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
545 amended by striking out, in lines 95, 99 and 103, the word “mother” and inserting in place
546 thereof, in each instance, the following word:- parent.

547 SECTION 87. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
548 amended by striking out, in line 100, the word “her” and inserting in place thereof the following
549 words:- the parent’s.

550 SECTION 88. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
551 amended by striking out, in line 106, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following
552 words:- the secretary.

553 SECTION 89. The seventh paragraph of said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so
554 appearing, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- An increase in income from a
555 cost-of-living adjustment made to social security, supplemental security income or social
556 security disability insurance shall not render a recipient ineligible for benefits under this chapter
557 in the year that the cost-of-living adjustment was issued.

558 SECTION 90. Section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
559 striking out, in lines 2, 8, 11, 57, 60 and 63 and 64, the words “mother or father” and inserting in
560 place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- parent.

561 SECTION 91. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
562 amended by striking out, in lines 16 and 17, the words “mother’s or father’s” and inserting in
563 place thereof the following word:- parent’s.

564 SECTION 92. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
565 amended by striking out, in line 33, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following
566 word:- the person.

567 SECTION 93. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
568 amended by striking out, in line 40, the words “mother and father” and inserting in place thereof
569 the following word:- parents.

570 SECTION 94. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
571 amended by striking out, in line 41, the words “in his” and inserting in place thereof the
572 following words:- within the secretary’s.

573 SECTION 95. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
574 amended by striking out, in line 45, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
575 words:- the secretary’s.

576 SECTION 96. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
577 amended by striking out, in lines 47 and 48, the words “the petition in his own name” and
578 inserting in place thereof the following words:- a petition.

579 SECTION 97. Section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
580 striking out, in line 3, the word “him”.

581 SECTION 98. Said section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
582 amended by striking out, in line 12, each time it appears, the word “him” and inserting in place
583 thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the secretary.

584 SECTION 99. Said section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
585 amended by striking out, in lines 15 and 19, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each
586 instance, the following words:- the secretary.

587 SECTION 100. Section 6A of said chapter 115 is hereby repealed.

588 SECTION 101. Section 6B of said chapter 115, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition,
589 is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 19, 28 and 35, the words “the sum of \$2,000” and
590 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following figure:- \$2,250.

591 SECTION 102. Said section 6B of said chapter 115 is hereby further amended by striking
592 out the figure “\$2,250”, inserted by section 101, each time it appears, and inserting in place
593 thereof, in each instance, the following figure:- \$2,500.

594 SECTION 103. Said section 6B of said chapter 115, as appearing in the 2022 Official
595 Edition, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 20, 29 and 35 and 36 the words “two
596 equal payments on August and February 1” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the
597 following words:- “1 payment on August 1.”

598 SECTION 104. Said section 6B of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
599 amended by striking out, in lines 21 and 30, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each
600 instance, the following words:- the veteran’s.

601 SECTION 105. Said section 6B of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
602 amended by striking out, in lines 31 and 32 the words “, provided that the surviving spouse does
603 not remarry,”.

604 SECTION 106. Section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
605 striking out, in line 4, the word “He” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- The
606 burial agent.

607 SECTION 107. Said section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
608 amended by striking out, in line 8, the words “his wife, or his widow” and inserting in place
609 thereof the following words:- the veteran’s spouse, or widowed person.

610 SECTION 108. Said section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
611 amended by striking out, in line 10, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following
612 words:- the burial agent.

613 SECTION 109. Said section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
614 amended by striking out, in lines 12 and 14, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each
615 instance, the following words:- the burial agent.

616 SECTION 110. Said section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
617 amended by striking out, in line 17 and 20, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each
618 instance, the following words:- the person’s.

619 SECTION 111. Section 8 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
620 striking out, in line 23, the words “widow, or widower” and inserting in place thereof the
621 following words:- widowed person.

622 SECTION 112. Section 9 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
623 striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:- The mayor
624 of every city and the select board of every town shall appoint a resident of such city or town who

625 shall be a veteran as a veterans' graves officer for a term to be determined by the appointing
626 authority; provided, however, that said term shall not exceed five years; provided further, that if
627 no qualified, willing and able veteran seeks such appointment, a spouse of a veteran or a member
628 of a Gold Star family may be appointed as a veterans' graves officer.

629 SECTION 113. Said chapter 115 is hereby amended by inserting after section 9 the
630 following section:-

631 Section 9A. The executive office of veterans' services shall operate, maintain and expand
632 the Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial cemetery located in the city known as the town of
633 Agawam and the Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial cemetery located in the town of
634 Winchendon and may add new cemetery locations, subject to the availability of funds, to meet
635 veterans' and veteran dependents' needs; provided, however, that the office shall maintain the
636 cemetery grounds, facilities and infrastructure and shall manage the burial and interment
637 services. The executive office may adopt additional rules, regulations and policies as necessary
638 to fulfill its responsibilities and ensure the proper functioning of the cemeteries under its control.

639 SECTION 114. Section 10 of said chapter 115, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition,
640 is hereby amended by striking out, in line 23, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof the
641 following word:- such director's.

642 SECTION 115. Said section 10 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
643 amended by striking out, in lines 31 and 32, the words "duties of his office" and inserting in
644 place thereof the following words:- office's duties.

645 SECTION 116. Said section 10 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
646 amended by striking out, in line 32, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
647 words:- the director’s.

648 SECTION 117. Said section 10 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
649 amended by striking out, in line 37, the words “his duties as treasurer of the district” and
650 inserting in place thereof the following words:- the district treasurer’s duties.

651 SECTION 118. Section 11 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
652 striking out, in line 2, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the
653 mayors.

654 SECTION 119. Said section 11 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
655 amended by striking out, in lines 3 and 4, the word “chairman” and inserting in place thereof the
656 following word:- chair.

657 SECTION 120. Said section 11 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
658 amended by striking out, in line 5, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
659 words:- the town manager’s.

660 SECTION 121. Said section 11 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
661 amended by striking out, in line 24, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
662 words:- the treasurer’s.

663 SECTION 122. Section 15 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
664 striking out, in line 4, the words “he, and his duly accredited agents,” and inserting in place
665 thereof the following words:- the director and the director’s agents.

666 SECTION 123. Said section 15 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further
667 amended by striking out, in line 11, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following
668 word:- a.

669 SECTION 124. Section 16 of said chapter 115, inserted by section 53 of chapter 126 of
670 the acts of 2022, is hereby amended by inserting after the first sentence the following sentence:-
671 The board shall ensure that veterans receive state-based veteran benefits if they receive: (i) an
672 other than honorable discharge on the basis of sex, race, color, religious creed, national origin,
673 age, genetic information, ancestry, marital status or disability; or (ii) any United States
674 Department of Veterans Affairs category eligible for a discharge upgrade, including, but not
675 limited to, mental health conditions, military sexual trauma and traumatic brain injury. The
676 executive office of veterans’ services shall promulgate rules and regulations to carry out this
677 section.

678 SECTION 125. Said section 16 of said chapter 115, as so inserted, is hereby further
679 amended by striking out, in lines 37, 40 and 50, the word “department” and inserting in place
680 thereof the following words:- executive office.

681 SECTION 126. Said chapter 115 is hereby further amended by adding the following
682 section:-

683 Section 18. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall have the following
684 meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

685 “Compensation”, payment of any money, thing of value or financial benefit.

686 “Person”, an individual, corporation, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, limited
687 liability company, association, joint venture, public corporation, government or governmental
688 subdivision, agency or instrumentality or any other legal or commercial entity.

689 “Veterans benefits matter”, the preparation, presentation or prosecution of any claim
690 affecting any person who has filed or expressed an intent to file a claim for any benefit, program,
691 service, commodity, function or status, entitlement to which is determined under the laws and
692 regulations administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or Department of
693 Defense pertaining to veterans, their dependents, their survivors and any other individual eligible
694 for such benefits.

695 (b) In regard to a veterans benefits matter, no person shall: (i) receive compensation for:
696 (A) preparation, presentation, prosecution, advising, consulting or assisting any individual with
697 regard to any veterans benefits matter, except as permitted under federal law; or (B) referring a
698 veteran to another person to prepare, present, prosecute, advise, consult or assist such veteran
699 with any veterans benefits matter; (ii) guarantee, either directly or by implication, that any
700 individual is certain to receive specific veterans benefits or that any individual is certain to
701 receive a specific level, percentage or amount of veterans benefits; or (iii) receive excessive or
702 unreasonable fees under 38 C.F.R 14.636(e) as compensation for advising or assisting any
703 veteran with any veterans benefits matter.

704 (c) A violation of this section shall also be a violation of chapter 93A.

705 SECTION 127. Chapter 115A of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out
706 section 1, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the following
707 section:-

708 Section 1. A person who is a veteran as defined in section 1 of chapter 115 shall be
709 entitled to out-patient treatment at, admission to and hospitalization in a state-operated veterans'
710 home, subject to the provisions of section 3.

711 SECTION 128. Section 9 of said chapter 115A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
712 striking out, in line 3, the words “home in the city of Chelsea” and inserting in place thereof the
713 following word:- homes.

714 SECTION 129. Section 12 of said chapter 115A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
715 striking out, in line 1, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:-
716 executive office.

717 SECTION 130. Said section 12 of said chapter 115A, as so appearing, is hereby further
718 amended by striking out, in line 22, the words “department of veterans” and inserting in place
719 thereof the following words:- executive office of veterans’.

720 SECTION 131. Section 3 of chapter 115B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
721 hereby amended by striking out, in line 16 to 18, inclusive, the words “home in the city of
722 Chelsea; and the chair of the board of trustees of the veterans’ home in the city of Holyoke” and
723 inserting in place thereof the following words:- homes.

724 SECTION 132. Section 73B of chapter 272 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
725 hereby amended by striking out, in lines 18, the second time it appears, and 23, the word
726 “department” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- executive
727 office.

728 SECTION 133. Section 11 of chapter 276A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
729 hereby amended by striking out, in lines 6 and 13, the words “the department” and inserting in
730 place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the executive office.

731 SECTION 134. Section 3 of chapter 71 of the acts of 1996, as amended by section 2 of
732 chapter 468 of the acts of 2002, is hereby further amended by striking out the second paragraph.

733 SECTION 135. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a member of
734 a retirement system who is a member in service and a veteran who failed to make the purchase
735 authorized in paragraph (h) of subdivision (1) of section 4 of chapter 32 of the General Laws
736 pursuant to chapter 71 of the acts of 1996 shall be given a 1-time opportunity to apply to the
737 retirement system to make said purchase within 1 year from the effective date of this act. Each
738 retirement system shall provide written notice to all members in service of their potential
739 eligibility for this purchase within 90 days of the effective date of this act.

740 SECTION 136. (a) The secretary of veterans’ services, in coordination with the executive
741 office of health and human services, shall convene a working group to review alternative
742 therapies for mental health treatments for veterans. The working group shall: (i) study whether
743 psychedelic therapy is associated with improved outcomes among veterans with diagnosed
744 mental health disorders; (ii) evaluate literature, research trials and expert opinions to determine if
745 psychedelic therapy is associated with improved outcomes regarding mental health treatment for
746 veterans; and (iii) issue recommendations regarding the provision of psychedelic therapy to treat
747 veterans with mental health disorders in the commonwealth. As used in this section,
748 “psychedelic therapy” shall mean the use of psilocybin, ketamine, or 3,4-

749 methylenedioxymethamphetamine under the direction of a health care provider to treat mental
750 health disorders.

751 (b) The secretary shall appoint the following members to the working group: 2 members
752 who shall represent medical centers or hospitals in the commonwealth that serve veterans; 2
753 members who shall represent health insurance companies; 2 members who shall represent
754 veterans' services organizations; 1 member who shall represent an organization currently
755 studying the subject matter of alternative therapies for mental health treatment of veterans; 1
756 member who shall represent the Center for the Neuroscience of Psychedelics at Massachusetts
757 General Hospital; and such other members with experience in behavioral health or veterans'
758 services as the secretary deems necessary. The secretary shall designate a chair of the working
759 group from the membership of the group.

760 (c) Not later than January 1, 2025, the working group shall file a report of its findings and
761 any recommendations with the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the joint
762 committee on veterans and federal affairs and the joint committee on mental health, substance
763 use and recovery.

764 SECTION 137. (a) There shall be a special commission to study post-traumatic stress
765 disorder in the commonwealth.

766 (b) The commission shall consist of: the secretary of health and human services, or a
767 designee, who shall serve as chair; the secretary of public safety and security, or a designee; the
768 secretary of veterans' services, or a designee; the commissioner of mental health, or a designee;
769 the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on mental health, substance use and recovery;
770 a representative of the National Guard appointed by the adjutant general of the Massachusetts

771 National Guard; and 9 members to be appointed by the secretary of health and human services, 1
772 of whom shall be an expert from the Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders Laboratory at
773 Harvard University in consultation with their relevant specialty chapters, 1 of whom shall be a
774 representative of Boston Children's Hospital, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the
775 Massachusetts Police Association, Inc., 1 of whom shall be a representative of Jane Doe Inc.:
776 The Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, 1 of whom shall be
777 a representative from Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Inc., 1 of
778 whom shall be a representative of Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts, 1 of whom shall
779 be a representative of the Massachusetts Corrections Officers Federated Union, 1 of whom shall
780 be a representative of a research advocacy or support organization primarily serving individuals
781 with post-traumatic stress disorder and 1 of whom shall be a representative of Massachusetts
782 General Hospital Home Base program.

783 (c) The commission shall: (i) assess and summarize the advances made in research on and
784 treatment and diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder; (ii) assess and summarize the advances
785 made in access to care for individuals with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder; (iii)
786 assess and summarize research services and support activities for post-traumatic stress disorder
787 across the commonwealth, including coordination of the commonwealth's activities and
788 programs with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder; and (iv) develop a comprehensive
789 strategic plan to improve health outcomes for individuals with a diagnosis of post-traumatic
790 stress disorder including, but not limited to, recommendations to: (A) advance research on post-
791 traumatic stress disorder; (B) improve the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder; (C)
792 improve public awareness and recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder; (D) improve mental
793 health care delivery for individuals with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder; (E)

794 improve the early and accurate diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder; and (F) systematically
795 advance the full spectrum of biomedical research on post-traumatic stress disorder.

796 (d) The commission shall submit its findings and recommendations to the clerks of the
797 house of representatives and senate not later than July 1, 2025.

798 SECTION 138. The executive office of veterans' services, in consultation with the
799 department of revenue, shall study property tax abatements and exemptions for veterans and
800 surviving spouses pursuant to chapter 59 of the General Laws. The study shall include, but not be
801 limited to: (i) veteran property tax exemptions in other states; (ii) the utilization of a sliding scale
802 based on the percentage of a veteran's disability for the awarding of such exemption to veterans
803 and spouses; (iii) determination of the relation of tax abatements and exemptions to United States
804 Department of Veterans Affairs disability rating; (iv) the financial impact these tax exemptions
805 have on veterans with disabilities; and (v) any anticipated monetary cost that the exemptions may
806 cause. The office shall file a report of its findings and recommendations with the joint committee
807 on veterans and federal affairs, the clerks of the senate and house of representatives and the
808 senate and house committees on ways and means not later than December 31, 2024.

809 SECTION 139. There shall be a special commission to study and develop proposals for
810 ways to improve the quality of life of veterans in the commonwealth, including, but not limited
811 to, employment opportunities for veterans. The commission shall collaborate with veterans'
812 organizations in the commonwealth to develop such proposals. The commission shall consist of:
813 the secretary of veterans' services or a designee, who shall serve as chair; the veteran advocate or
814 a designee; a representative from BRAVE for Veterans, Inc.; 2 persons appointed by the
815 governor with experience in veterans' advocacy; 3 persons appointed by the senate president

816 with experiencing working with veterans; 1 person appointed by the speaker of the house of
817 representatives who is a veteran or the spouse or family member of a veteran; 1 person appointed
818 by the senate minority leader who is a veteran or the spouse or family member of a veteran; and
819 an attorney with experience in veterans issues in the commonwealth, appointed by the minority
820 leader of the house of representatives.

821 Not later than December 31, 2024, the commission shall submit a report of its findings to
822 the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, the clerks of the senate and house of
823 representatives and the senate and house committees on ways and means.

824 SECTION 140. Sections 25 and 27 shall take effect on taxable years beginning on
825 January 1, 2024.

826 SECTION 141. Sections 29 and 33 to 39, inclusive, shall take effect 6 months after the
827 effective date of this act.

828 SECTION 142. Sections 60 and 101 shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

829 SECTION 143. Section 102 shall take effect on July 1, 2025.