

**SENATE . . . . . No. 2315**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***John J. Cronin***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to modernize chapter 115.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>John J. Cronin</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	
<i>Steven George Xiarhos</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>	<i>6/8/2023</i>

**SENATE . . . . . No. 2315**

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By Mr. Cronin, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2315) of John J. Cronin for legislation to modernize chapter 115. Veterans and Federal Affairs.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act to modernize chapter 115.

*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. Section 1 of chapter 115, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is  
2 hereby amended by striking out, in line 3, the words ““Commissioner”, commissioner of  
3 veterans’ services” and inserting in place thereof the following definitions:-

4           “Secretary”, Secretary of veterans’ services.

5           “Commissioner”, commissioner of the City of Boston’s office of veterans’ services.

6           SECTION 2. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
7 striking out, in line 7 the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
8 following words:- the veteran’s.

9           SECTION 3. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
10 striking out, in lines 10, 12, and 47 the words “he is” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
11 instance, the following words:- they are.

12 SECTION 4. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
13 striking out, in line 11 the word “himself” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
14 following word:- ~~himself~~.

15 SECTION 5. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
16 striking out, in lines 36 and 42, the words “he has” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
17 instance, the following words:- ~~he has~~.

18 SECTION 6. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
19 striking out, in line 11, 24, and 25, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
20 the following word:- ~~his~~.

21 SECTION 7. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
22 striking out, in line 12, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
23 following word:- ~~he~~.

24 SECTION 8. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
25 striking out, in line 13 the word “is” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
26 following words:- ~~is~~.

27 SECTION 9. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
28 striking out, in line 25, the words “he applies” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
29 following words:- ~~he applies~~.

30 SECTION 10. Section 1 of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
31 out, in line 20, the words “provided, however, that any such person who enters”.

32 SECTION 11. Section 1 of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
33 out, in line 21, the words “the commonwealth solely for the purpose of obtaining benefits under”.

34 SECTION 12. Section 1 of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
35 out, in line 22, the words “this chapter shall not be considered to reside in the commonwealth;”.

36 SECTION 13. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
37 striking out, in line 27, the words “sanatorium or wayfarer’s lodge,”.

38 SECTION 14. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
39 striking out, in line 28 the word “convalescent” and inserting in place thereof the following  
40 words:- rehabilitation program.

41 SECTION 15. Section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
42 inserting, in line 52, after the word “Veterans’ agent” the following words:-

43 Or “Veterans’ Service Officer (VSO)” or “Veterans’ benefits and services officers”

44 SECTION 16. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
45 striking out, in lines 1, 18, 24, 29, 55, 57, 69, 132, 144, and 151, the word “commissioner” and  
46 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- secretary.

47 SECTION 17. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
48 striking out, in lines 2, 80, and 119, the words “veterans’ agents” and inserting in place thereof,  
49 in each instance, the following words:- veterans service officer.

50 SECTION 18. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
51 striking out, in lines 21, 72, and 150, the words “veterans’ agent” and inserting in place thereof,  
52 in each instance, the following words:- veterans service officer.

53 SECTION 19. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
54 striking out, in lines 6, 18, 78, and 144 the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
55 instance, the following words:- the secretary’s.

56 SECTION 20. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
57 striking out, in lines 8, 12, 13, 14, 20, 59, 63, 72, 78, 98, 112, 117, 119, 123, 125, 127, 131, 134,  
58 and 141, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the  
59 secretary.

60 SECTION 21. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
61 striking out, in lines 12, 61, 68, 78, 85, 93, 107, 112, 113 the word “him” and inserting in place  
62 thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the secretary.

63 SECTION 22. The first sentence of paragraph 3 of section 2 of chapter 115, as so  
64 appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the word "towns" the following words:- cities, or  
65 regional districts.

66 SECTION 23. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
67 striking out, in line 74 the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
68 following words:- the veteran’s.

69 SECTION 24. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
70 striking out, in line 74 the words “wife or widow” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
71 instance, the following words:- spouse or surviving spouse.

72 SECTION 25. Section 2 of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
73 out, in line 21, the word “or”.

74 SECTION 26. Section 2 of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
75 out, in line 22, the words “part-time veterans’ agent”.

76 SECTION 27. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
77 striking out, in line 23 the words “claimant veterans’ agent or part-time veterans’ agent” and  
78 inserting in place thereof the following word:- person.

79 SECTION 28. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
80 striking out, in line 44 the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
81 following words:- the person’s.

82 SECTION 29. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
83 striking out, in line 108, the word “inmates” and inserting in place thereof the following words:-  
84 inhabitants.

85 SECTION 30. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
86 striking out, in line 93 the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
87 following words:- the recipient or applicant’s.

88 SECTION 31. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
89 striking out, in line 93, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
90 following words:- the recipient or applicant’s.

91 SECTION 32. Section 2 of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
92 out, in line 120, the words “and of the directors of veterans’ services of the”.

93 SECTION 33. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
94 striking out, in line 121, the words “various cities, towns, and” and inserting in place thereof the  
95 following words:- or regional.

96 SECTION 34. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
97 striking out, in line 122, the word “in” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- on.

98 SECTION 35. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
99 striking out, in line 146, the word “chairman” and inserting in place thereof the following word:-  
100 chairperson.

101 SECTION 36. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
102 striking out, in line 147, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the  
103 chairperson’s.

104 SECTION 37. Section 2A of said chapter 115, as appearing, is hereby amended by  
105 striking out, in lines 1 and 16, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
106 instance, the following word:- secretary.

107 SECTION 38. Section 2A of said chapter 115, as appearing, is hereby amended by  
108 striking out, in lines 2, 4, 6, 7, and 11, the words “veterans’ agent” and inserting in place thereof,  
109 in each instance, the following words:- veterans service officer.

110 SECTION 39. Section 2A of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
111 out, in line 17, the words “on a petition in”.

112 SECTION 40. Section 2A of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
113 out, in line 18, the word “equity”.

114 SECTION 41. Section 2B of said chapter 115, as appearing, is hereby amended by  
115 striking out, in line 3, the words “status as veterans” and inserting in place thereof following  
116 words:- history of military service.

117 SECTION 42. Section 2B of said chapter 115, as appearing, is hereby amended by  
118 striking out, in lines 5 and 6, the word “affairs” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
119 the following word:- services.

120 SECTION 43. Section 2B of said chapter 115, as appearing, is hereby amended by  
121 striking out, in lines 6 and 7, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
122 following words:- the secretary’s.

123 SECTION 44. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
124 out, in lines 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 20 the words “veterans’ agent” and inserting in place thereof, in  
125 each instance, the following words:- veterans service officer.

126 SECTION 45. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
127 out, in line 1, the words “except Boston, shall and the selectmen”.

128 SECTION 46. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
129 striking out, in line 2, the words “of each town may” and inserting in place thereof the following  
130 words:- or town shall.

131 SECTION 47. The second sentence of section 3 of chapter 115 of the General Laws, as  
132 so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “selectmen” the following words:-  
133 form a regional district in accordance with the procedures established by the secretary and.



134 SECTION 48. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
135 by striking out, in line 15, the words “his wife or widow” and inserting in place thereof the  
136 following words:- the veterans’ spouse, or surviving spouse.

137 SECTION 49. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
138 striking out, in line 16, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof the following  
139 word:- secretary.

140 SECTION 50. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
141 striking out, in lines 17, 22, and 24 the word “him” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
142 instance, the following word:- the secretary.

143 SECTION 51. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
144 striking out, in line 21, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the  
145 veteran’s.

146 SECTION 52. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
147 striking out, in line 21, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the  
148 veteran.

149 SECTION 53. The first sentence of section 3A of chapter 115 of the General Laws, as so  
150 appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “photostatic” the following words:- or  
151 electronic.

152 SECTION 54. The title of section 3A of chapter 115 of the General Laws, as so  
153 appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “photostatic” the following words:- or  
154 electronic.

155 SECTION 55. Section 4 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
156 striking out, in lines 3, 4, and 8 the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
157 the following word:- their.

158 SECTION 56. Section 4 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
159 striking out, in line 5, 8, and 11, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof the  
160 following word:- secretary.

161 SECTION 57. Section 4 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
162 striking out the second paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

163 Veteran service officer shall complete applications authorized by the department of  
164 transitional assistance and division of medical assistance for any veteran, widow and dependent  
165 applying for veterans benefits or for medical assistance under chapters one hundred and 117A,  
166 one hundred and eighteen, and one hundred and eighteen E if agreed to by an applicant. The  
167 veterans agent shall file the application for the veteran if the veteran selects assistance under said  
168 chapter one hundred and eighteen E. The application shall be processed through the said  
169 departments. Veterans agents shall advise of their entitlement to veterans benefits or benefits  
170 from public assistance.

171 SECTION 58. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
172 by striking out, in lines 12, 27, 29, 60, 70, 82, 84, 86, 99, and 108 the word “commissioner” and  
173 inserting in place thereof the following word:- secretary.

174 SECTION 59. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
175 striking out, in lines 2 and 3, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
176 following words:- the veteran.

177 SECTION 60. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
178 striking out, in lines 6 and 9, the words “three years” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
179 instance, the following words:- one day.

180 SECTION 61. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
181 striking out the third paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

182 No veteran who is or shall otherwise be entitled to veterans' benefits shall lose their right  
183 thereto by reason of their absence from the commonwealth while receiving hospital treatment,  
184 under orders of the United States Veterans' Administration, at any hospital located outside the  
185 commonwealth, nor shall the right of their dependents thereto be lost while they are actually  
186 receiving such hospital treatment by reason of their absence from the commonwealth to  
187 accompany them.

188 SECTION 62. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
189 striking out, in lines 4, 15, and 25, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
190 the following words:- the veteran.

191 SECTION 63. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
192 striking out, in line 23, the word “himself” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
193 following word:- himself.

194 SECTION 64. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
195 striking out, in line 5, the words “he has” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
196 following words:- they have.

197 SECTION 65. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
198 striking out, in lines 60, 69, and 85 the words “veterans’ agent” and inserting in place thereof, in  
199 each instance, the following words:- veterans’ service officer.

200 SECTION 66. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
201 striking out, in line 7, the words “he is” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
202 following words:- they are.

203 SECTION 67. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
204 striking out, in lines 7, 24, 56, 62, 63, 87, and 95, the words “his” and inserting in place thereof,  
205 in each instance, the following words:- their.

206 SECTION 68. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
207 striking out, in lines 21, 25, and 71, the words “him” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
208 instance, the following word:- them.

209 SECTION 69. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
210 striking out, in line 100, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
211 following words:- the secretary.

212 SECTION 70. Section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
213 striking out, in lines 5, 20, 25, 42, 48 the words “veterans’ agent” and inserting in place thereof,  
214 in each instance, the following words:- veterans’ service officer.

215 SECTION 71. Section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
216 by striking out, in lines 39, 43, 44, 45, 48, and 50, the word “commissioner” and inserting in  
217 place thereof the following word:- secretary.

218 SECTION 72. Section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
219 striking out, in line 32, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
220 following word:- them.

221 SECTION 73. Section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
222 striking out, in lines 43 and 45, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
223 the following word:- their.

224 SECTION 74. Section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
225 striking out, in lines 9, 11, 13, and 17, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof, in  
226 each instance, the following word:- secretary.

227 SECTION 75. Section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
228 striking out, in line 3, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
229 following words:- said applicant.

230 SECTION 76. Section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
231 striking out, in lines 11 and 12, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
232 the following word:- them.

233 SECTION 77. Section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
234 striking out, in lines 14 and 18, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
235 following words:- the secretary.

236 SECTION 78. Section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
237 striking out, in line 12, the words “veterans’ agent” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
238 instance, the following words:- veterans’ service officer.

239 SECTION 79. Section 6A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
240 striking out, in line 3, the words “clause forty third of section 7 of chapter 4” and inserting in  
241 place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the 43rd clause, Chapter 4, Section 7.

242 SECTION 80. Section 6A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
243 striking out, in line 28, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
244 following words:- the veteran’s.

245 SECTION 81. Section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
246 striking out, in lines 3 and 12, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
247 following word:- they.

248 SECTION 82. Section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
249 by striking out, in lines 4 and 13, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
250 instance, the following word:- secretary.

251 SECTION 83. Section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
252 by striking out, in lines 7 and 16, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
253 the following word:- their.

254 SECTION 84. Section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
255 by striking out, in line 7, the words “his wife, or his widow” and inserting in place thereof the  
256 following words:- their spouse, or their widow.

257 SECTION 85. Section 8 of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
258 out, in lines 24, 25, 26, and 28, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
259 instance, the following word:- secretary.

260 SECTION 86. Section 9 of chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
261 out, in line 26, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof the following word:-  
262 secretary.

263 SECTION 87. Section 10 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
264 by striking out, in lines 22 and 29, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
265 the following word:- their.

266 SECTION 88. Section 11 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
267 by striking out, in lines 2 and 5 and 22, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
268 instance, the following word:- their.

269 SECTION 89. Section 12 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
270 by striking out, in lines 8, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof the following  
271 word:- secretary.

272 SECTION 90. Section 13 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
273 inserting before the first paragraph the following paragraph:-

274 Said departments shall coordinate with the department of transitional assistance to  
275 identify and contact all known veterans receiving public safety net benefits residing in  
276 Massachusetts who may be eligible for Chapter 115 benefits. They shall also publish online sub-  
277 regulatory guidance and application forms and make publicly available issue notices of action  
278 and public information that outline budgeting and benefit calculations.

279 SECTION 91. Section 14 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
280 by striking out, in line 2, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof the following  
281 word:- secretary.

282 SECTION 92. Section 15 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
283 striking out, in line 4, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- they.

284 SECTION 93. Section 15 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended  
285 by striking out, in lines 4 and 11, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance,  
286 the following word:- their.