

HOUSE No. 3889

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Steven George Xiarhos

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 relative to extending Veterans benefits to surviving spouses.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Steven George Xiarhos</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Joseph D. McKenna</i>	<i>18th Worcester</i>	<i>2/11/2025</i>
<i>Kelly W. Pease</i>	<i>4th Hampden</i>	<i>3/25/2025</i>
<i>Marcus S. Vaughn</i>	<i>9th Norfolk</i>	<i>6/25/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3889

By Representative Xiarhos of Barnstable, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3889) of Steven George Xiarhos and Joseph D. McKenna relative to extending veterans benefits to surviving spouses. Veterans and Federal Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to extending Veterans benefits to surviving spouses.

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. (a) Section 5 of chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws, as
2 appearing in the most recent edition, is hereby amended by striking out the current rates of
3 benefits provided to veterans and inserting in place thereof the following provisions:-

4 1. The amount of financial assistance provided to eligible veterans shall be increased by
5 25% over the current rate of benefits.

6 2. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Veterans' Services shall annually review the
7 cost of living and adjust the benefit rates accordingly to ensure veterans' benefits keep pace with
8 inflation.

9 (b) Section 5A of chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws is further amended by
10 adding the following:-

11 (1) Upon the death of an eligible veteran, the surviving spouse shall continue to receive
12 the same financial assistance benefits provided under Chapter 115 for a period of 12 months
13 following the death of the veteran.

14 (2) After the initial 12-month period, the surviving spouse shall continue to receive
15 financial assistance at 75% of the veteran's benefit rate, provided the spouse remains unmarried
16 and continues to meet the eligibility criteria set forth by the Department of Veterans' Services.

17 (3) In the event of remarriage, benefits shall cease at the time of remarriage.

18 (4) The Executive Office of Veterans' Services shall establish guidelines to ensure a
19 seamless transition of benefits from the veteran to the surviving spouse, including application
20 procedures and eligibility verification processes.

21 SECTION 2. (a) The Commonwealth shall allocate the necessary funds to the Executive
22 Office of Veterans' Services to implement the increased benefits and to administer the extension
23 of benefits to surviving spouses.

24 (b) The Executive Office of Veterans' Services shall work in coordination with local
25 veterans' agents to ensure eligible veterans and their surviving spouses are informed of the
26 changes to Chapter 115 benefits and the process for applying for and receiving benefits.

27 SECTION 3. (a) The Executive Office of Veterans' Services shall submit a report to the
28 General Court within 18 months of the enactment of this act, detailing the financial impact of the
29 increased benefits and the extension of benefits to surviving spouses. The report shall include
30 recommendations for any further legislative action needed to ensure the sustainability and
31 effectiveness of the Chapter 115 benefits program.