

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 23-71—sHB 5510

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

AN ACT INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE IN REFERENCES TO THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

SUMMARY: This act expands the general definitions of “armed forces” and “members of armed forces” under state law to include the U.S. Space Force (USSF) and makes related technical and conforming changes.

In doing so, the act includes in the general statutory definition of “veteran” USSF members (i.e., guardians) who (1) are honorably discharged, (2) are discharged under honorable conditions, or (3) received an other than honorable discharge due to a qualifying condition. Therefore, it provides these guardians access to various state veterans’ benefits and programs such as property tax exemptions, tuition benefits, and burial in a state veterans’ cemetery.

By law, “armed forces” already consists of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Air Force, and any of their reserve components, including the Connecticut National Guard when under federal service.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023

BACKGROUND

U.S. Space Force

In December 2019, Congress established the USSF as a new branch of the armed forces, organized under the umbrella of the U.S. Air Force (in a similar manner as the Marines and the U.S. Navy). It is an independent entity that organizes, trains, and manages its own operational force. However, it relies on the Air Force for a large portion of its enabling functions (e.g., logistics, base support, technology support, and financial management).

Federal Law

The federal government expanded the statutory definition of “armed forces” in 2019 to include USSF members, thereby generally extending to guardians eligibility for federal benefits (10 U.S.C. § 101). It is in the process of making related technical and conforming changes to various federal statutes and regulations.