



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

Raised Bill No. 6441

LCO No. 3517



Referred to Committee on VETERANS' AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Introduced by:
(VA)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS' OFFICE OF ADVOCACY AND ASSISTANCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 27-102l of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
3 *2025*):

4 (b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a manager to administer an
5 Office of Advocacy and Assistance for the aid and benefit of veterans
6 and their spouses, eligible dependents and family members. The office
7 shall have a staff of not less than [ten] nineteen men and women,
8 including [eight] not less than fourteen veterans' service officers, and
9 not less than three clerical personnel. The manager and veterans' service
10 officers shall be veterans, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103,
11 or veterans who were awarded the armed forces expeditionary medal
12 for service by the armed forces.

13 (2) (A) The manager shall develop a training module on assisting and
14 serving women veterans with regard to state or federal services or

15 benefits and identifying and advising such veterans of community or
16 nonprofit programs focused on assisting and serving such veterans. The
17 manager shall hold and provide instruction for an annual training
18 session, in accordance with such module, to each veterans' service
19 officer and any member of a municipal veterans advisory committee,
20 director of municipal veterans services or municipal veterans
21 representative, as described in subsection (c) of section 27-135, or
22 representative from an Operation Academic Support for Incoming
23 Service Members center at a public institution of higher education in this
24 state.

25 (B) At least one of the veterans' service officers shall be a woman
26 having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans, who
27 shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective upon
28 the next opening of a veterans' service officer position occurring on or
29 after July 1, 2010, at least two of the veterans' service officers shall be
30 individuals having bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish, within
31 existing authorized positions. At least two of the veterans' service
32 officers shall, in addition to carrying out the duties under this section,
33 be responsible for overseeing and supporting municipalities'
34 compliance with the provisions of section 27-135. Each veterans' service
35 officer shall (i) successfully complete a course in veterans' benefits not
36 later than one year after commencement of employment, (ii) attend the
37 training session described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, and
38 (iii) be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the state.

39 (3) The office staff shall, at least twice annually, conduct a training
40 course for any member of a municipal veterans advisory committee,
41 director of municipal veterans services or municipal veterans
42 representative. The office staff shall include in such training course a
43 summary of state and federal services and benefits, the requirements
44 under section 27-135, and any assistance the office staff may provide to
45 any such member, director or representative related to such
46 requirements.

47 (4) (A) The office shall develop a written outreach plan identifying (i)
48 strategies for conducting outreach to veterans and their spouses, eligible
49 dependents and family members for purposes of providing assistance
50 in claims for veterans' services or benefits, and (ii) to the extent possible,
51 specific events and other opportunities to provide such assistance that
52 are sponsored by the office or in which the office is participating. The
53 office shall update such written outreach plan as necessary to improve
54 the efficacy of its outreach efforts.

55 (B) The manager and each veterans' service officer shall electronically
56 track information relating to outreach conducted or attended by the
57 office, including, but not limited to, the title or type of any outreach
58 event conducted or attended and the number of veterans or their
59 spouses, eligible dependents or family members to whom substantive
60 services or referrals were provided.

61 (C) The office shall utilize the notifications received from the
62 administrator of each nursing home and assisted living facility in the
63 state, pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of this section, to
64 develop an annual schedule for each veterans' service officer to visit
65 nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The office shall compile any
66 information collected as a result of such visits and provide quarterly
67 reports on such information to the Board of Trustees for the Department
68 of Veterans Affairs.

69 (D) The office shall provide quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees
70 for the Department of Veterans Affairs on (i) concerns raised by veterans
71 or their spouses, eligible dependents or family members, which
72 concerns shall be summarized by type, frequency and resolution, (ii)
73 petitions filed by veterans or their spouses, eligible dependents or
74 family members received by the commissioner under section 27-102l(d)-
75 54 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies for the four preceding
76 months, and (iii) copies of any such petitions.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	27-1021(b)

Statement of Purpose:

To provide for additional staffing at the Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Advocacy and Assistance.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]