



Substitute Senate Bill No. 968

Public Act No. 19-129

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MILITARY TO MACHINISTS AND VETERANS PLATFORM TO EMPLOYMENT PILOT PROGRAMS AND PROVIDING OTHER EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS.

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

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2019*) (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Advanced manufacturing" means a manufacturing process that makes extensive use of computer, high-precision or information technologies integrated with a high-performance work force in a production system capable of furnishing a heterogeneous mix of products in small or large volumes with either the efficiency of mass production or the flexibility of custom manufacturing in order to respond quickly to customer demands. "Advanced manufacturing" includes newly developed methods to manufacture existing products and the manufacture of new products emerging from new advanced technologies;

(2) "Eligible business" means a business that (A) has operations in Connecticut, (B) has been registered to conduct business for not less than twelve months, and (C) is in good standing with respect to the payment of all state and local taxes. "Eligible business" does not include the state or any political subdivision thereof;

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(3) "Private occupational school" has the same meaning as provided in section 10a-22a of the general statutes;

(4) "Public institution of higher education" means any of the institutions of higher education identified in subdivision (2) of section 10a-1 of the general statutes;

(5) "Qualifying advanced manufacturing certificate program" means a for-credit or noncredit sub-baccalaureate advanced manufacturing certificate program offered by a public institution of higher education or a private occupational school in which at least seventy-five per cent of the graduates of such certificate program are employed in a field related to or requiring such certificate in the year following graduation; and

(6) "Veteran" means any person (A) honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions from active service in, the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, or (B) with a qualifying condition, as defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, who has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active service in the armed forces.

(b) Not later than October 1, 2019, the work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall develop and operate a pilot program to be known as the Military to Machinists program for veterans. The program shall assist any veteran in a region served by the pilot program in (1) earning an advanced manufacturing certificate from a qualifying advanced manufacturing certificate program, and (2) securing employment in the field of advanced manufacturing with any eligible business after such veteran has obtained an advanced manufacturing certificate.

(c) (1) The work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall designate an appropriate

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number of employees, as determined by the board, to act as liaisons, and each liaison shall provide the assistance described in subsection (b) of this section on behalf of the program.

(2) In connection with providing the assistance described in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section, each liaison designated pursuant to this subsection shall also assist a veteran served by the program to obtain funding for the cost of attending a qualifying advanced manufacturing certificate program. Such funding may include, but need not be limited to, (A) tuition waivers under sections 10a-77 and 10a-99 of the general statutes, and (B) expenditures from the Workforce Training Authority Fund under section 31-11jj of the general statutes.

(3) In connection with providing the assistance described in subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section, each liaison designated pursuant to this subsection shall also assist any eligible business to apply for (A) a grant under section 31-3uu of the general statutes, and (B) tax credits under section 12-217g of the general statutes, if applicable.

(d) The work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall operate the pilot program within its work force development region. The board may offer the program in other work force development regions in the state, in conjunction with the appropriate regional work force development board.

(e) Not later than February 1, 2020, the work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall develop or approve promotional materials describing the pilot program and the various opportunities and benefits that the program may provide for veterans in the state. The board shall distribute such materials to qualified veterans' charitable organizations, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-100f of the general statutes, and

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Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service Members centers. The board shall revise and redistribute the materials as the board deems appropriate.

(f) Not later than February 1, 2020, and annually thereafter until the pilot program is terminated, the work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall report on the operation of the pilot program and its recommendation to continue, discontinue or expand the program. Such report shall include measures of the effectiveness of the program, including, but not be limited to, data on the (1) number of veterans served by the pilot program; (2) number of veterans pursuing or earning advanced manufacturing certificates through the program and the type and amount of funding assistance received by the veterans; and (3) number of veterans securing employment in the field of advanced manufacturing with an eligible business through the program, the salaries earned by such veterans, the number of such veterans retaining employment in advanced manufacturing over time and the number and amount of grants and tax credits received by eligible businesses hiring such veterans. The board shall submit the report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to veterans' affairs.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2019*) (a) Not later than October 1, 2019, the work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall develop and operate a pilot program to be known as the Veterans Platform to Employment Program. The program shall provide training and subsidized employment for veterans who have experienced long-term unemployment in a similar manner to the Platform to Employment Program currently operated by such board. The pilot program shall provide veterans in a region served by the program with (1) a

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preparatory program that includes services such as skills assessments, career readiness workshops, employee assistance programs and coaching, and (2) employment assistance that includes identifying positions at local employers and providing subsidies to employers that hire veterans for trial work experiences that may lead to continued employment. The pilot program may offer additional services to assist veterans, including personal and family support services and financial counseling. As used in this section, "veteran" means any person (A) honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions from active service in, the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, or (B) with a qualifying condition, as defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, who has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active service in the armed forces.

(b) The work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall operate the pilot program within its work force development region. The board may offer the program in other work force development regions in the state, in conjunction with the appropriate regional work force development board.

(c) Not later than February 1, 2020, and annually thereafter until the pilot program is terminated, the work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall submit a report on the operation of the pilot program and its recommendation to continue, discontinue or expand the program. Such report shall include measures of the effectiveness of the program, including, but not limited to, data on the (1) number of veterans served by the program, (2) number of veterans placed with employers by the program and the salaries earned by such veterans, and (3) number of such veterans retaining employment over time. The board shall submit the report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General

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Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to veterans' affairs.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2019*) Not later than October 1, 2019, the work force development board for the southwest work force development region of the state shall identify appropriate written materials to distribute to employers on the topic of mental health conditions common to veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder, risk of suicide, depression and grief. Such materials shall provide guidance on (1) identifying the signs and symptoms of such mental health conditions, and (2) assisting employees who are veterans and who exhibit such signs and symptoms in the workplace. The board shall distribute such materials to employers participating in or who may participate in the pilot programs established under sections 1 and 2 of this act, and may distribute the materials to other employers that may hire veterans.

Sec. 4. Section 31-3w of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2019*):

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, the Labor Commissioner, in exercise of any duties including any duties as administrator under chapter 567, shall, within available resources, maintain a state-wide network of job centers which provide to workers, students and employers comprehensive workforce development assistance, including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Unemployment compensation, retraining allowances and other forms of federal and state income support;

(2) Career, labor market, educational and job training information, and consumer reports on local training providers;

(3) Career planning and job search assistance;

(4) Applicant recruitment and screening, assessment of training

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needs, customized job training pursuant to this chapter, apprenticeship programs pursuant to chapter 557 and related consultative services to employers based on their employment needs;

(5) Eligibility determinations and referrals to providers of employment and training services; and

(6) Access to information regarding job openings and, where appropriate, referral to such openings.

(b) In carrying out responsibilities under this section, the commissioner shall:

(1) Collaborate with the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission established pursuant to section 31-3h and the regional workforce development boards established pursuant to section 31-3k;

(2) Promote coordination of service delivery and collaboration with other public and private providers of education, human services and employment and training services, including, but not limited to, adult education and literacy providers;

(3) Consult with the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to ensure coordination of service delivery to employers;

(4) Conduct outreach to employers and trade associations to ensure that services meet the needs of business and industry; and

(5) Develop a comprehensive job training assistance application for employer-based training services and programs that allows the applicant to apply for any such assistance offered by the state in one application.

(c) (1) When contacted by a veteran who is in need of employment or work force development services, the department shall (A) determine whether the veteran resides closer to a work force

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development board facility with a veterans unit than to a department facility offering such employment or work force development assistance and, if so, provide the veteran with contact information for the work force development board, and (B) provide a veteran who expresses an interest in advanced manufacturing, as defined in section 1 of this act, with information on the Military to Machinists program operated pursuant to section 1 of this act, if such veteran may be eligible for services from such program.

(2) For purposes of this subsection, "veteran" means any person (A) honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions from active service in, the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, or (B) with a qualifying condition, as defined in section 27-103, who has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active service in the armed forces.