



General Assembly

February Session, 2020

Raised Bill No. 355

LCO No. 2207



Referred to Committee on VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Introduced by:
(VA)

***AN ACT CONCERNING HMONG LAOTIAN SPECIAL GUERRILLA UNITS
SERVING IN THE KINGDOM OF LAOS.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 14-20b of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2020*):

3 (a) [The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at] (1) At the request of any
4 (A) veteran or member of the armed forces or the surviving spouse of
5 such veteran or member, or (B) member of the Hmong Laotian special
6 guerilla units, which units served in the United States secret war in the
7 Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War, the Commissioner of Motor
8 Vehicles shall register any motor vehicle owned or leased for a period
9 of at least one year by such [person] veteran, member, surviving spouse
10 or member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units and shall issue
11 a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates for each
12 such motor vehicle, including a special certificate of registration and a
13 set of number plates for any motor vehicle used exclusively for farming
14 purposes by any such veteran, [or] member, [of the armed forces, or the]
15 surviving spouse [of such veteran or member,] or member of the Hmong
16 Laotian special guerilla units, who is engaged in agricultural production

17 as a trade or business. The plates shall expire and be renewed as
18 provided in section 14-22. The commissioner shall charge a fee for such
19 plates, which fee shall cover the entire cost of making such plates and
20 shall be in addition to the fee for registration of such motor vehicle.

21 (2) As used in this subsection, "member of the armed forces" has the
22 same meaning as provided in section 27-103 and "veteran" means any
23 person [(1)] (A) honorably discharged from, or released under
24 honorable conditions from active service in, the armed forces, or [(2)] (B)
25 with a qualifying condition, as defined in section 27-103, who has
26 received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active
27 service in the armed forces.

28 (b) Any such member of the armed forces who is dishonorably
29 discharged shall return such plates to the commissioner not later than
30 thirty days after such discharge. The commissioner shall not renew such
31 plates for any motor vehicle owned or leased by any such member of
32 the armed forces who is dishonorably discharged.

33 Sec. 2. Section 14-36h of the general statutes is repealed and the
34 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2020*):

35 (a) Each motor vehicle operator's license issued by the Commissioner
36 of Motor Vehicles in accordance with section 14-36 and each identity
37 card issued by said commissioner in accordance with section 1-1h shall
38 contain the following: (1) The person's full legal name; (2) the person's
39 date of birth; (3) the person's gender; (4) the person's height and eye
40 color; (5) the person's assigned operator's license or identity card
41 number; (6) the person's address of principal residence in this state; (7)
42 the person's signature; (8) the person's photograph or digital image; and
43 (9) if applicable, the person's status as a veteran, as provided in
44 subsection (e) or (f) of this section.

45 (b) If any person does not reside in any state, territory or possession
46 of the United States because such person is on active military duty with
47 the United States Armed Forces, and such person's home state of record
48 is Connecticut, as reflected in the records of the Department of Defense,

49 Department of Homeland Security or any department under which the
50 United States Coast Guard operates, such person may obtain a
51 Connecticut operator's license or identity card, provided such person:
52 (1) Does not have an operator's license or identity card issued by another
53 state, territory or possession of the United States, or surrenders any such
54 license or identity card; (2) has a current APO or FPO mailing address;
55 (3) designates such person's home address as 60 State Street,
56 Wethersfield, CT 06161; and (4) meets all other requirements for
57 obtaining an operator's license or identity card in this state.

58 (c) The commissioner shall provide that each such license or identity
59 card document contains physical security features designed to prevent
60 tampering, counterfeiting or duplication of the document.

61 (d) Each such document shall also contain one or more machine-
62 readable technology feature or component, including, but not limited to,
63 a bar code or magnetic strip.

64 (e) Any person who is a veteran may submit a request to the
65 Department of Veterans Affairs to have his or her status as a veteran
66 contained on his or her motor vehicle operator's license or identity card.
67 Said department shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such
68 request, verify whether such person is a veteran and, if so, notify the
69 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request and verification. The
70 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall indicate such person's status as a
71 veteran on any motor vehicle operator's license or identity card issued
72 to such person upon original issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle
73 operator's license or identity card or upon issuance of a duplicate motor
74 vehicle operator's license or identity card.

75 (f) Any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special
76 guerilla units may submit a request to the Department of Veterans
77 Affairs to be listed as a veteran, based on such service, on his or her
78 motor vehicle operator's license or identity card. Such person shall
79 provide to said department (1) an affidavit stating (A) when such person
80 served, (B) where such person served, (C) the unit in which such person

81 served, and (D) the capacity in which such person served; (2)
82 corroborating witness affidavits, if available; (3) any available official
83 documentation of service; and (4) any other documents supporting such
84 person's affidavit. Said department shall, not later than thirty days after
85 receipt of such request, verify whether such person was a member of the
86 Hmong Laotian special guerilla units and, if so, notify the
87 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of such request and verification. The
88 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall indicate veteran status on any
89 motor vehicle operator's license or identity card issued to such person
90 upon original issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle operator's license
91 or identity card or upon issuance of a duplicate motor vehicle operator's
92 license or identity card.

93 [(f)] (g) As used in this section: (1) "Full legal name" means the most
94 complete version of the name that appears on a person's certificate of
95 birth, official passport or other document or documents accepted by the
96 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to verify the person's identity, unless
97 the person presents a marriage license or certificate, a certificate of civil
98 union, a divorce decree or an order of a court of competent jurisdiction
99 pertaining to a permanent change of the person's name; and (2)
100 "veteran" means (A) any person honorably discharged from, or released
101 under honorable conditions from active service in, the armed forces, as
102 defined in section 27-103, (B) any former member of the armed forces
103 who is entitled to retirement pay under 10 USC Chapter 1223, as
104 amended from time to time, or, but for age, would be so entitled, [or]
105 (C) any person with a qualifying condition, as defined in section 27-103,
106 who has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable
107 from active service in the armed forces, or (D) any member of the
108 Hmong Laotian special guerilla units, which units served in the United
109 States secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War.

110 Sec. 3. Section 27-118 of the general statutes is repealed and the
111 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2020*):

112 (a) When any veteran or member of the Hmong Laotian special
113 guerilla units, as defined in subsection (e) of this section, dies, not

114 having sufficient estate to pay the necessary expenses of the veteran's or
115 member's last sickness and burial, as determined by the commissioner
116 after consultation with the probate court for the district in which the
117 veteran or member resided, the state shall pay the sum of one thousand
118 eight hundred dollars toward such funeral expenses, and the burial
119 shall be in some cemetery or plot not used exclusively for the burial of
120 the pauper dead, and the same amount shall be paid if the body is
121 cremated, but no amount shall be paid for the expenses for burial or
122 cremation unless claim therefor is made within one year from the date
123 of death, except that in cases of death occurring abroad, such claim may
124 be made within one year after the remains of such veteran or member
125 have been interred in this country. No provision of this section shall
126 prevent the payment of the sum above named for the burial of any
127 person, otherwise entitled to the same, on account of such burial being
128 made outside the limits of this state.

129 (b) Upon satisfactory proof by the person who has paid or provided
130 for the funeral or burial expense to the commissioner of the identity of
131 the deceased veteran, the time and place of the deceased's death and
132 burial and the approval thereof by the commissioner, said sum of one
133 thousand eight hundred dollars shall be paid by the Comptroller to the
134 person who has paid the funeral or burial expense or, upon assignment
135 by such person, to the funeral director who has provided the funeral.

136 (c) Upon satisfactory proof by the person who has paid or provided
137 for the funeral or burial expense to the commissioner of (1) the identity
138 of the deceased member, (2) the time and place of the deceased
139 member's death and burial, (3) an affidavit stating (A) when the
140 deceased member served, (B) where the deceased member served, (C)
141 the unit in which the deceased member served, and (D) the capacity in
142 which the deceased member served, (4) corroborating witness
143 affidavits, if available, (5) any available official documentation of
144 service, and (6) any other documents supporting the affidavit by the
145 person who has paid or provided for the funeral or burial expense, and
146 the approval thereof by the commissioner, said sum of one thousand
147 eight hundred dollars shall be paid by the Comptroller to the person

148 who has paid the funeral or burial expense or, upon assignment by such
149 person, to the funeral director who has provided the funeral.

150 (d) Whenever the Comptroller has lawfully paid any sum toward the
151 expenses of the burial of any deceased veteran or member and it
152 afterwards appears that the deceased left any estate, the Comptroller
153 may present a claim on behalf of the state against the estate of such
154 deceased veteran or member for the sum so paid, and the claim shall be
155 a preferred claim against such estate and shall be paid to the Treasurer
156 of the state. The commissioner, upon the advice of the Attorney General,
157 may make application for administration upon the estate of any such
158 deceased veteran or member if no other person authorized by law
159 makes such application within sixty days after such payment has been
160 made by the Comptroller.

161 (e) As used in this section, (1) "veteran" means any person [(1)] (A)
162 honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions
163 from active service in, the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, or
164 [(2)] (B) with a qualifying condition, as defined in said section, who has
165 received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active
166 service in the armed forces, and (2) "member" means any person who
167 served in the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units, which units served
168 in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the
169 Vietnam War.

170 Sec. 4. Section 27-122b of the general statutes is repealed and the
171 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2020*):

172 (a) As used in this section, (1) "veteran" means any person [(1)] (A)
173 honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions
174 from, active service in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air
175 Force or Coast Guard or any women's auxiliary branch thereof,
176 organized pursuant to an Act of Congress, [; (2)] (B) who has completed
177 at least twenty years of qualifying service, as described in and computed
178 under 10 USC Chapter 1223, as amended from time to time, in the
179 Connecticut National Guard, [;] or [(3)] (C) who was killed in action, or

180 who died as a result of accident or illness sustained while performing
181 active service, in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force
182 or Coast Guard or any women's auxiliary branch thereof, organized
183 pursuant to an Act of Congress, or in the Connecticut National Guard,
184 and (2) "member" means any person who served in the Hmong Laotian
185 special guerilla units, which units served in the United States secret war
186 in the Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War.

187 (b) (1) Any veteran or member may, by letter or other communication
188 addressed to the commissioner, or by will, request that upon his or her
189 death his or her body be buried in a veterans' cemetery established
190 pursuant to section 27-122a, or (2) the spouse or other next of kin may
191 apply to the commissioner to have the body of such veteran or member
192 buried in said veterans' cemetery, and in either case such request shall
193 be granted.

194 (c) (1) Any member or former member of the armed forces, as defined
195 in subsection (a) of section 27-103, who is a resident of this state and is
196 entitled to retirement pay under 10 USC Chapter 1223, as amended from
197 time to time, or would have been entitled to retirement pay under said
198 chapter, but for the fact that the person is under sixty years of age, may
199 by letter or other communication addressed to the commissioner, or by
200 will, request that his or her body will be buried in said veterans'
201 cemetery, or (2) the spouse or other next of kin may apply to the
202 commissioner to have the body of such member or former member
203 buried in said veterans' cemetery, and, in either case, such request shall
204 be granted.

205 (d) The spouse of any veteran or member shall, upon similar request
206 or application made to the commissioner, be buried in said veterans'
207 cemetery provided only one such request or application shall be
208 granted.

209 (e) The commissioner shall designate an area in said veterans'
210 cemetery for veterans and members who, for religious reasons, require
211 burial in a consecrated area.

212 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2020*) (a) The Commissioner of
213 Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Adjutant General, shall award
214 a ribbon and medal to each member, as defined in subsection (b) of this
215 section, who is a resident of this state. The commissioner, in consultation
216 with the Adjutant General, shall adopt regulations, in accordance with
217 the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, setting forth the
218 process for designing the ribbon and medal, identifying such members
219 who are eligible for the ribbon and medal under this section and
220 establishing procedures for distributing the ribbon and medal to each
221 such eligible member. The cost of the ribbons and medals shall be paid
222 from the funds appropriated to the military assistance account within
223 the Military Department. Within existing budgetary resources, awards
224 under this section may be made posthumously to any deceased
225 member.

226 (b) As used in this section, "member" means any person who served
227 in the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units, which units served in the
228 United States secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam
229 War.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	14-20b
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	14-36h
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	27-118
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	27-122b
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To provide certain benefits to members of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units who served in the secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War.

[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.]