

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 4661

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, May 21, 2024.

The committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the Bill honoring, empowering, and recognizing our servicemembers and veterans (printed in House, No. 4172, changed), reports recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment substituting therefor the accompanying bill (House, No. 4661).

For the committee,

AARON MICHLEWITZ.

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4661**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
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An Act honoring, empowering, and recognizing our servicemembers and veterans.

*Whereas*, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide forthwith to honor, empower and recognize servicemembers and veterans in the commonwealth, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

*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. Section 34 of chapter 2 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022  
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 2, the word “department” and  
3 inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

4           SECTION 2. Chapter 6 is hereby amended by inserting after section 15ZZZZZZ the  
5 following section:-

6           Section 15AAAAAAA. (a) The governor shall annually issue a proclamation on  
7 Memorial Day in recognition of the sacrifices of Gold Star families in the commonwealth and  
8 the following landmarks and bridges shall be illuminated in gold on Memorial Day to  
9 commemorate and recognize the lives of those lost in military service, including, but not limited  
10 to:

- 11 (1) the Gold Star Families Bridge in the city of Lynn;
- 12 (2) the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge in the cities of Boston and  
13 Cambridge;
- 14 (3) the Longfellow Bridge in the cities of Boston and Cambridge;
- 15 (4) the Fore River Bridge in the city of Quincy and the town of Weymouth; and
- 16 (5) the Kenneth F. Burns Memorial Bridge in the city of Worcester and the town of  
17 Shrewsbury.

18 (b) The governor, the department of transportation, the executive office of veterans’  
19 services and the Military Friends Foundation shall establish policies and procedures necessary to  
20 implement this section.

21 SECTION 3. Subsection (d) of section 16DD of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as  
22 appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 29, the second  
23 time it appears, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:-  
24 executive office.

25 SECTION 4. Section 105 of said chapter 6A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
26 striking out, in line 1, the words “a department” and inserting in place thereof the following  
27 words:- an executive office.

28 SECTION 5. Section 4G of chapter 7 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
29 amended by striking out, in lines 7 to 8, the words “the department of veterans’ services.”.

30 SECTION 6. Section 61 of said chapter 7, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking  
31 out, in lines 124 and 125, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following  
32 words:- executive office.

33 SECTION 7. Section 17 of chapter 11 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
34 amended by striking out, in line 21, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the  
35 following words:- executive office.

36 SECTION 8. Section 49 of chapter 31 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
37 amended by striking out, in lines 14 and 15, the words “home in the city of Chelsea” and  
38 inserting in place thereof the following word:- homes.

39 SECTION 9. Section 4 of chapter 32 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
40 amended by inserting after the word “be”, in line 148, the following words:- provided written  
41 notice by the retirement board upon entry into service that they are.

42 SECTION 10. Said section 4 of said chapter 32, as so appearing, is hereby further  
43 amended by inserting after the word “member”, in line 151, the following words:- , prior to or  
44 within 1 year of vesting pursuant to this chapter,.

45 SECTION 11. Section 5 of chapter 59 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
46 amended by inserting after clause Twenty-second H the following 2 clauses:-

47 Twenty-second I. In a city or town that accepts this clause and is certified by the  
48 commissioner to be assessing all property at full and fair cash valuation, an abatement granted  
49 pursuant clause Twenty-second, Twenty-second A, Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C,  
50 Twenty-second E or Twenty-second F shall be increased annually by an amount equal to the

51 increase in the cost of living as determined by the Consumer Price Index for such year. The  
52 department of revenue shall annually inform each city or town that accepts this clause of the  
53 amount of this increase.

54 Twenty-second J. In a city or town that accepts this clause and is certified by the  
55 commissioner to be assessing all property at full and fair cash valuation, a taxpayer who  
56 otherwise qualifies for an exemption pursuant clause Twenty-second, Twenty-second A,  
57 Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C, Twenty-second E or Twenty-second F shall be granted an  
58 additional exemption that shall be uniform for all herein named exemptions and the amount of  
59 which shall not exceed 100 per cent of the exemption for which the taxpayer qualifies, as may be  
60 determined by the legislative body of the city or town, subject to its charter, not later than the  
61 beginning of the fiscal year to which the additional exemption shall commence. Once accepted,  
62 the amount of the exemption shall continue until amended by the legislative body of the city or  
63 town. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary, the exemption shall be in  
64 addition to any exemption allowable pursuant to this section; provided, however, that in no  
65 instance shall the taxable valuation of the property, after all applicable exemptions, be reduced  
66 below 10 per cent of its full and fair cash valuation, except through the applicability of clause  
67 Eighteenth. Acceptance of this clause by a city or town shall not increase the amount that the city  
68 or town otherwise would have been reimbursed by the commonwealth pursuant to the clause.  
69 The additional exemption contained within this clause shall not be implemented in any year in  
70 which the city or town has also accepted the section 5C1/2 of chapter 59.

71 SECTION 12. Section 6 of chapter 62 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
72 amended by striking out, in line 1113, as so appearing, the figure “2,000” and inserting in place  
73 thereof the following figure:- 2,500.

74 SECTION 13. Said section 6 of said chapter 62, as so appearing, is hereby further  
75 amended by striking out, in line 1130, as so appearing, the figure “2,000” and inserting in place  
76 thereof the following figure:- 2,500.

77 SECTION 14. Section 38GG of chapter 63 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is  
78 hereby amended by striking out, in line 8, the figure “2,000” and inserting in place thereof the  
79 following figure:- 2,500.

80 SECTION 15. Said section 38GG of said chapter 63, as so appearing, is hereby further  
81 amended by striking out, in line 24, the figure “2,000” and inserting in place thereof the  
82 following figure:- 2,500.

83 SECTION 16. Section 6 of chapter 64H of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
84 amended by striking out subsection (u) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

85 (u) Sale of a motor vehicle purchased by and for the use of a person who has suffered loss  
86 of, or permanent loss of use of, both legs or both arms or 1 leg and 1 arm or by and for the use of  
87 a veteran who has been determined to be permanently disabled by the medical advisory board  
88 established under section 8C of chapter 90 and has been issued a disabled veteran number plate  
89 or a purple heart recipient plate under section 2 of said chapter 90; provided, that this exemption  
90 shall apply to 1 motor vehicle only owned and registered for the personal, noncommercial use of  
91 such person. A person issued a purple heart recipient plate shall not have to forfeit their purple  
92 heart recipient plate for a disabled veteran number plate to receive the exemption from the tax in  
93 this paragraph.

94 SECTION 17. Section 4 of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
95 amended by striking out, in lines 32 and 39, each time it appears, the word “department” and  
96 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- executive office.

97 SECTION 18. Section 2 of chapter 90 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking  
98 out, in lines 172 to 186, inclusive, as so appearing, the words “pleasure passenger vehicles  
99 owned by veterans who, according to the records of the United States Veterans’ Administration,  
100 has been determined to have a service-connected disability rating of 60 per cent or greater and by  
101 reason of service in the armed forces of the United States have suffered loss or permanent loss of  
102 use of one or both feet; or loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; or permanent  
103 impairment of vision of both eyes of the following status: central visual acuity of 20/200 or less  
104 in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a  
105 field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter  
106 of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees in the better eye, or  
107 any other disability or handicap of such veterans which may be determined by the medical  
108 advisory board as established by section eight C, and”.

109 SECTION 19. The seventh paragraph of said section 2 of said chapter 90, as so  
110 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the third and fourth sentences.

111 SECTION 20. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking  
112 out, in lines 246 to 258, inclusive, as so appearing, the words “and the words “Disabled Veteran”  
113 for a pleasure passenger vehicle or a pick-up truck owned or leased by and used by a veteran  
114 who, according to the records of the United States Veterans’ Administration, by reason of service  
115 in the armed forces of the United States has suffered loss or permanent loss of use of one or both

116 feet; or loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; or permanent impairment of vision of  
117 both eyes of the following status: central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with  
118 corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which  
119 the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field  
120 subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye, or any other disability  
121 or handicap”.

122 SECTION 21. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking out  
123 the twelfth paragraph, as so appearing.

124 SECTION 22. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking out  
125 the fifteenth through seventeenth paragraphs, inclusive, as so appearing.

126 SECTION 23. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking out  
127 the nineteenth through twenty-second paragraphs, inclusive, as so appearing.

128 SECTION 24. Said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 2I the  
129 following section:-

130 Section 2J. (a) The registrar shall design and maintain a series of distinct and individual  
131 license plates recognizing those who have served in the military and for those who deserve  
132 special recognition relating to or deriving from military service.

133 (b) Any veteran meeting the definition of a veteran in clause forty-third of section 7 of  
134 chapter 4 or section 1 of chapter 115, or who is eligible for the annuity provided under section  
135 6C of chapter 115, shall be eligible and entitled to a veteran plate which shall carry the



136 denotation “VETERAN”, upon presentation of satisfactory evidence of such status as determined  
137 by the registrar.

138 (c) The series of distinct and individual license plates recognizing those who have served  
139 in the military and for those who deserve special recognition relating to or deriving from military  
140 service shall include the license plates described in the following paragraphs:

141 (1) Veterans ranked as at least 60 per cent disabled by the United States Department of  
142 Veterans Affairs, including those who have suffered the loss of a limb, permanent visual acuity  
143 loss of 20/200 in an eye, or are otherwise determined to be disabled or handicapped by the  
144 medical advisory board established in section 8C, shall be entitled to a distinctive disabled  
145 veteran plate.

146 (2) Veterans who have been captured and incarcerated by foreign forces in conflict or  
147 held as prisoners of war shall be entitled to a distinctive plate recognizing that status.

148 (3) Veterans who are members of the Legion of Valor of the United States of America,  
149 Incorporated shall be entitled to a distinctive plate recognizing that status.

150 (4) Veterans awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor shall be entitled to a distinctive  
151 plate recognizing that status, including, subject to availability, the use of the initials of the award  
152 recipient followed by CMH signifying their award.

153 (5) Veterans awarded the Order of the Purple Heart shall be entitled to a distinctive plate  
154 indicating that status which shall include the words “COMBAT WOUNDED.”

155 (6) Survivors of the attack upon Pearl Harbor shall be entitled to a distinctive plate  
156 reflecting that status and bearing the word “VETERAN” thereupon.

157 (7) Residents of the commonwealth serving in any branch of the national guard shall be  
158 entitled to a distinctive plate reflecting that status.

159 (8) Residents of the commonwealth awarded the Medal of Liberty under section 67A of  
160 chapter 33 shall be entitled to a distinctive plate reflecting that status.

161 (9) The next of kin of a member of the armed forces, in possession of a Gold Star Lapel  
162 Button under the regulations of the United States Secretary of Defense, shall be entitled to a  
163 Gold Star Family distinctive plate. Said button shall not be an eligibility requirement for those  
164 who have presented other satisfactory evidence of their status, as determined by the registrar.

165 (d) A veteran who has served in the armed forces and is entitled to a veteran license plate  
166 shall also be entitled to the issuance of a decal or emblem denoting their branch of service.  
167 Residents of the commonwealth identifying as a woman veteran who served in any branch shall  
168 be entitled to a distinctive decal which the registry of motor vehicles shall design and issue.

169 (e) The following individuals shall be entitled to a distinctive plate, emblem or decal  
170 denoting their award status:

171 (1) Owners of private vehicles awarded 1 of the following decorations for valor or  
172 gallantry: the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Distinguish  
173 Service Cross, the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, or any other similar award designated by the  
174 secretary of veterans' services.

175 (2) A resident of the commonwealth qualifying as a Gold Star parent, child, sibling,  
176 grandchild or spouse. A distinctive plate, under this paragraph, may not be used in conjunction  
177 with a motor vehicle that has promotional or advertising material thereupon.

178 (f) Veterans entitled to a distinctive plate shall be entitled to have a distinctive emblem or  
179 decal reflecting service in Operation Enduring Freedom or the receipt of the Iraqi Freedom  
180 Campaign Ribbon, an Afghanistan Campaign Ribbon, a Persian Gulf Campaign Ribbon, the  
181 Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Inherent Resolve  
182 Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Vietnam Service  
183 Medal, the Kosovo Campaign Medal, or the Prisoner of War Medal.

184 (g) Under any special recognition or status recognized in this section, a widowed person  
185 shall not be compelled to surrender their distinctive plate, emblem or decal unless they remarry,  
186 cancel or fail to renew registration. If the deceased person was entitled to recognition under any  
187 portion of this section but did not apply for special status under this section, a widowed person  
188 may nonetheless apply in the stead of their deceased spouse.

189 (h) Any special status under this section shall entitle the bearer to only 1 special plate,  
190 emblem or decal; provided, however, that such person may, at their option, have the distinctive  
191 plate, emblem or decal issued in a form suitable for use on a motorcycle rather than a passenger  
192 car.

193 (i) Any plate to which an individual is entitled under this section shall be issued without  
194 fee other than the established registration fee for private passenger motor vehicles and  
195 motorcycles. The registrar may provide individuals the option of paying an additional fee. Any  
196 funds related to the additional fee generated under this section shall be distributed to the state-  
197 operated veterans' homes on an equal basis, to their special account, up to \$500,000 for each  
198 home. Any excess fee over \$500,000 for each state-operated veterans' home shall be placed in  
199 the special trust fund subject to the control of the secretary of veterans' services.

200 SECTION 25. Section 244 of chapter 111 of the General Laws, inserted by section 14 of  
201 chapter 154 of the acts of 2022, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 2, as appearing in the  
202 2022 Official Edition, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place thereof the following  
203 word:- secretary.

204 SECTION 26. Said section 244 of said chapter 111, inserted by said section 14 of said  
205 chapter 154, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 28, as appearing in the 2022  
206 Official Edition, the word “commissioner”, the second time it appears, and inserting in place  
207 thereof the following word:- secretary.

208 SECTION 27. Said section 244 of said chapter 111, inserted by said section 14 of said  
209 chapter 154, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 35 and 38, as appearing in the  
210 2022 Official Edition, each time it appears, the word “commissioner” and inserting in place  
211 thereof the following word:- secretary.

212 SECTION 28. Said section 244 of said chapter 111, inserted by said section 14 of said  
213 chapter 154, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 43, as appearing in the 2022  
214 Official Edition, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:-  
215 executive office.

216 SECTION 29. Section 244 of said chapter 111, inserted by section 34 of chapter 177 of  
217 the acts of 2023, is hereby repealed.

218 SECTION 30. Chapter 111 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the  
219 following section:-

220           Section 245. The department shall administer an initiative to increase public awareness of  
221 and education on the availability of the extreme risk protection order process established  
222 pursuant to sections 131R to 131Y, inclusive, of chapter 140, to remove a firearm from the  
223 control, ownership or possession of an individual who poses a risk of causing bodily injury to  
224 themselves or others. The initiative shall focus on the heightened risk of suicide associated with the  
225 possession of a firearm and shall include information on: (i) eligibility to petition for an extreme  
226 risk protection order; (ii) the procedure to petition for an extreme risk protection order; (iii)  
227 options to voluntarily surrender a firearm to a law enforcement agency; and (iv) the availability  
228 of existing legal resources and support services for a potential petitioner.

229           SECTION 31. Section 1 of chapter 115 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022  
230 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the definition of “Dependent” and inserting  
231 in place thereof the following definition:-

232           “Dependent”, the spouse, widowed person, child or parent of a veteran, including any  
233 person who stood in the relationship of a parent to such veteran for the 5 years next preceding the  
234 commencement of the veteran’s wartime service; provided, that no child of a veteran who is  
235 older than 18 years of age shall be deemed a dependent, unless the child meets the criteria  
236 established for emancipation pursuant to section 28 of chapter 208 or section 9 of chapter 209C  
237 or unless the child is mentally or physically unable to support themselves after attaining the age  
238 of 23.

239           SECTION 32. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
240 amended by striking out, in line 25, the word “his”, each time it appears, and inserting in place  
241 thereof, in each instance, the following word:- their.

242 SECTION 33. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
243 amended by striking out, in line 26, the words “he applies” and inserting in place thereof the  
244 following words:- they apply.

245 SECTION 34. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
246 amended by striking out the definition of “veteran” and inserting in place thereof the following  
247 definition:-

248 “Veteran”, any person who (a) is a veteran as defined in clause Forty-third of section 7 of  
249 chapter 4; or (b) served on active duty in the armed forces for at least 90 days and whose last  
250 discharge or release was under conditions other than dishonorable; or (c) served on active duty,  
251 to include active duty solely for training purposes, in the armed forces, and was awarded a  
252 service-connected disability or who died in such service under conditions other than  
253 dishonorable; or (d) served in the national guard or as a reservist in any branch of the armed  
254 forces, including active duty solely for training purposes, and was awarded a service-connected  
255 disability or who died in such service under conditions other than dishonorable; or (e) is  
256 determined to be a veteran according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; provided, that  
257 in any case, the service of such person qualified under clause (a) through clause (e) was entered  
258 into or served in Massachusetts, or such person has resided in the commonwealth for 1 day,  
259 except for the purpose of determining the residential eligibility of a deceased veteran’s  
260 dependents.

261 SECTION 35. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
262 amended by striking out, in lines 54 to 55, the words “as defined in clause Forty-third of section  
263 seven of chapter four,”.

264 SECTION 36. Section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
265 striking out, in lines 1 to 2, the words “as defined in clause Forty-third of section seven of  
266 chapter four”.

267 SECTION 37. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
268 amended by striking out, in lines 7, 20, 39, 45 and 98, each time it appears, the word “his” and  
269 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- the.

270 SECTION 38. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
271 amended by striking out, in lines 8, 12, 20, 66, 82, 103, 123, 131, 139 and 150, each time it  
272 appears, the word “He” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:-  
273 The secretary.

274 SECTION 39. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
275 amended by striking out, in lines 12, 63, 71, 89, 98, 113, 118 and 119, each time it appears, the  
276 word “him” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the secretary.

277 SECTION 40. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
278 amended by striking out, in lines 13, 14, 61, 76, 118, 125, 129, 134 and 142, each time it  
279 appears, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the  
280 secretary.

281 SECTION 41. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
282 amended by striking out the sixth paragraph.

283 SECTION 42. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
284 amended by striking out, in line 82, the words “him or by his” and inserting in place thereof the  
285 following words:- the secretary or the secretary’s.

286 SECTION 43. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
287 amended by striking out, in lines 153 and 156, each time it appears, the word “his” and inserting  
288 in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- a.

289 SECTION 44. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
290 amended by striking out, in line 155, the word “chairman” and inserting in place thereof the  
291 following word:- chairperson.

292 SECTION 45. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
293 amended by adding the following 3 paragraphs:-

294 The secretary shall provide, subject to appropriation, a medical assistance benefit in  
295 addition to the other benefits provided in this chapter. A recipient of the medical assistance  
296 benefit shall, where applicable, make use of private, state or federally funded resources before  
297 seeking aid under this paragraph. The medical assistance benefit shall include, but shall not be  
298 limited to, covering the cost of those necessary medical visits, procedures, prescriptions, costs  
299 and other such treatment as the secretary shall determine through regulations. The secretary  
300 shall, by regulation or otherwise, make provision to keep the program efficient and economical.

301 The secretary shall provide, subject to the appropriation, a behavioral health assistance  
302 benefit in addition to the other benefits provided in this chapter. A recipient of the behavioral  
303 health assistance benefit shall, where applicable, make use of private, state or federally funded  
304 resources before seeking aid under this paragraph. The behavioral health assistance benefit shall



305 include, but shall not be limited to, covering the cost of those necessary outpatient behavioral  
306 health assessments, evaluations, visits, prescriptions, costs and other such treatment as the  
307 secretary shall determine through regulations. The secretary shall, by regulation or otherwise,  
308 make provision to keep the program efficient and economical.

309         The secretary shall provide, subject to appropriation, a dental assistance benefit in  
310 addition to the other benefits provided in this chapter. A recipient of the dental assistance benefit  
311 shall, where applicable, make use of private, state or federally funded resources before seeking  
312 aid under this paragraph. The dental assistance benefit shall include, but shall not be limited to,  
313 covering the cost of those necessary medical visits, procedures, prescriptions, costs and other  
314 such treatment as the secretary shall determine through regulations. The secretary shall, by  
315 regulation or otherwise, make provision to keep the program efficient and economical.

316         SECTION 46. Section 2B of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
317 striking out, in lines 7 and 8, each time it appears, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof,  
318 in each instance, the following word:- a.

319         SECTION 47. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
320 striking out, in line 17, the word “his”.

321         SECTION 48. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
322 amended by striking out, in line 18, the words “civil war”.

323         SECTION 49. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
324 amended by striking out, in lines 18 to 19, the words “his wife or widow” and inserting in place  
325 thereof the following words:- a veteran’s spouse or widowed person.

326 SECTION 50. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
327 amended by striking out, in line 20, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following  
328 words:- the secretary.

329 SECTION 51. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
330 amended by striking out, in line 20, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
331 words:- the agent’s.

332 SECTION 52. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
333 amended by striking out, in line 24, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof the following  
334 words:- the veteran.

335 SECTION 53. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
336 amended by striking out, in line 24, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
337 words:- the veteran’s.

338 SECTION 54. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
339 amended by striking out, in lines 25 and 27, each time it appears, the word “him” and inserting in  
340 place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the agent.

341 SECTION 55. Section 4 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
342 striking out, in lines 4, 5 and 8, each time it appears, the word “his” and inserting in place  
343 thereof, in each instance, the following word:- the.

344 SECTION 56. Said section 4 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
345 amended by striking out, in line 14, the word “widow” and inserting in place thereof the  
346 following words:- widowed person.

347 SECTION 57. Said section 4 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
348 amended by striking out, in line 20, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
349 word:- their.

350 SECTION 58. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
351 striking out, in lines 2 and 55, each time it appears, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof,  
352 in each instance, the following words:- the veteran.

353 SECTION 59. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
354 amended by striking out, in line 3, the words “he has” and inserting in place thereof the  
355 following words:- they have.

356 SECTION 60. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
357 amended by striking out, in lines 4, 16, 25, 26, 43, 45, 51, 59, 62, 63 and 66, each time it  
358 appears, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:-  
359 their.

360 SECTION 61. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
361 amended by striking out, in lines 5 to 10, the words “unless he has actually resided within the  
362 commonwealth continuously for three years next preceding the date of his application for such  
363 benefits, nor unless the veteran of whom he is a dependent has actually resided within the  
364 commonwealth continuously for three years next preceding the date of such dependent’s  
365 application for such benefits” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- except upon  
366 like terms.

367 SECTION 62. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
368 amended by striking out, in lines 22, 27 and 74, each time it appears, the word “him” and  
369 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- them.

370 SECTION 63. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
371 amended by striking out, in line 24, the word “himself” and inserting in place thereof the  
372 following word:- themselves.

373 SECTION 64. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
374 amended by striking out in lines 39, 54, 102 and 103, each time it appears, the word “his” and  
375 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the veteran’s.

376 SECTION 65. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
377 amended by striking out, in line 42, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
378 words:- the secretary’s.

379 SECTION 66. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
380 amended by striking out, in line 57, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following  
381 words:- the veteran.

382 SECTION 67. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
383 amended by striking out, in line 59, the word “He” and inserting in place thereof the following  
384 word:- They.

385 SECTION 68. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
386 amended by striking out, in line 61, the word “he” and inserting in place thereof the following  
387 word:- they.

388 SECTION 69. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
389 amended by striking out, in line 92, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
390 words:- the veterans’ agent’s.

391 SECTION 70. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
392 amended by striking out, in lines 95, 99 and 103, each time it appears, the word “mother” and  
393 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- parent.

394 SECTION 71. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
395 amended by striking out, in line 100, the word “her” and inserting in place thereof the following  
396 words:- the parent’s own.

397 SECTION 72. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
398 amended by striking out, in line 106, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following  
399 words:- the secretary.

400 SECTION 73. The seventh paragraph of said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so  
401 appearing, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- An increase in income from a  
402 cost-of-living adjustment made to social security, supplemental security income or social  
403 security disability insurance shall not serve to render any recipient ineligible for benefits under  
404 this chapter in the year that the cost-of-living adjustment was issued.

405 SECTION 74. Section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
406 striking out, in lines 2, 8, 11, 57, 60, and 63 to 64, each time they appear, the words “mother or  
407 father” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- parent.

408 SECTION 75. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
409 amended by striking out, in lines 16 to 17, the words “mother’s or father’s” and inserting in place  
410 thereof the following word:- parent’s.

411 SECTION 76. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
412 amended by striking out, in line 33, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following  
413 word:- them.

414 SECTION 77. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
415 amended by striking out, in line 40, the words “mother and father” and inserting in place thereof  
416 the following word:- parents.

417 SECTION 78. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
418 amended by striking out, in line 41, the words “in his” and inserting in place thereof the  
419 following words:- within their.

420 SECTION 79. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
421 amended by striking out, in line 45, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
422 words:- the secretary’s.

423 SECTION 80. Said section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
424 amended by striking out, in lines 47 to 48, the words “the petition in his own name” and inserting  
425 in place thereof the following words:- a petition.

426 SECTION 81. Section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
427 striking out, in line 3, the word “him”.

428 SECTION 82. Said section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
429 amended by striking out, in line 12, each time it appears, the word “him” and inserting in place  
430 thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the secretary.

431 SECTION 83. Said section 6 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
432 amended by striking out, in lines 15 and 19, each time it appears, the word “he” and inserting in  
433 place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the secretary.

434 SECTION 84. Section 6A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby repealed.

435 SECTION 85. Section 6B of chapter 115 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
436 amended by striking out, in lines 19, 28 and 35, each time it appears, the figure “2,000” and  
437 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following figure:- 2,250.

438 SECTION 86. Said section 6B of said chapter 115 is hereby further amended by striking  
439 out the figure “2,250”, inserted by section 85, each time it appears, and inserting in place thereof,  
440 in each instance, the following figure:- 2,500.

441 SECTION 87. Said section 6B of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
442 amended by striking out, in lines 21 and 30, each time it appears, the word “his” and inserting in  
443 place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the veteran’s.

444 SECTION 88. Section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
445 striking out, in line 4, the word “He” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- The  
446 burial agent.

447 SECTION 89. Said section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
448 amended by striking out, in line 8, the words “his wife, or his widow” and inserting in place  
449 thereof the following words:- spouse, or widowed person.

450 SECTION 90. Said section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
451 amended by striking out, in line 10, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following  
452 words:- the burial agent.

453 SECTION 91. Said section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
454 amended by striking out, in lines 12 and 14, each time it appears, the word “he” and inserting in  
455 place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the burial agent.

456 SECTION 92. Said section 7 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
457 amended by striking out, in line 17, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
458 word:- their.

459 SECTION 93. Section 8 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
460 striking out, in line 23, the words “widow, or widower” and inserting in place thereof the  
461 following words:- widowed person.

462 SECTION 94. Section 9 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
463 striking out, in line 3, the words “, as defined in clause Forty-third of section seven of chapter  
464 four,”.

465 SECTION 95. Said chapter 115 is hereby amended by inserting after section 9 the  
466 following section:-



467           Section 9A. The executive office of veterans’ services shall have the authority to operate,  
468 maintain and expand the Massachusetts Veterans’ Memorial Cemetery located in the city of  
469 Agawam and the Massachusetts Veterans’ Memorial Cemetery located in the town of  
470 Winchendon, and may add new locations, subject to the availability of funds, to meet veterans’  
471 and dependents’ needs. This authority includes, but shall not be limited to, the maintenance and  
472 upkeep of the cemetery grounds, facilities and infrastructure, the burial and interment services in  
473 accordance with established federal protocols and regulations and the overall management and  
474 administration of the cemeteries. The executive office may adopt additional rules, regulations  
475 and policies as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities and ensure the proper functioning of the  
476 cemeteries under its control.

477           SECTION 96. Section 10 of said chapter 115, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition,  
478 is hereby amended by striking out, in line 23, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the  
479 following word:- their.

480           SECTION 97. Said section 10 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
481 amended by striking out, in lines 31 and 32, the words “duties of his office” and inserting in  
482 place thereof the following words:- office’s duties.

483           SECTION 98. Said section 10 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
484 amended by striking out, in line 32, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
485 word:- the.

486           SECTION 99. Said section 10 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
487 amended by striking out, in line 37, the words “his duties as treasurer of the district” and  
488 inserting in place thereof the following words:- the district treasurer’s duties.

489 SECTION 100. Section 11 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
490 striking out, in lines 2 and 5, each time it appears, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof,  
491 in each instance, the following word:- their.

492 SECTION 101. Said section 11 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
493 amended by striking out, in lines 3 to 4, the word “chairman” and inserting in place thereof the  
494 following word:- chairperson.

495 SECTION 102. Said section 11 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
496 amended by striking out, in line 24, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
497 word:- the.

498 SECTION 103. Section 15 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
499 striking out, in line 4, the words “he, and his duly accredited agents,” and inserting in place  
500 thereof the following words:- they and their agents.

501 SECTION 104. Said section 15 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further  
502 amended by striking out, in line 11, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
503 word:- a.

504 SECTION 105. Section 16 of said chapter 115, inserted by section 53 of chapter 126 of  
505 the acts of 2022, is hereby amended by inserting after the first sentence the following sentence:-  
506 The veterans equality review board shall ensure that veterans receive state-based veteran benefits  
507 if they receive: (i) an other than honorable discharge because of sex, race, color, religious creed,  
508 national origin, age, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, disability; or (ii) any U.S.  
509 Department of Veterans Affairs category eligible for upgrade, including, but not limited to,  
510 mental health conditions, military sexual trauma and traumatic brain injury.

511 SECTION 106. Section 16 of said chapter 115, inserted by section 18 of chapter 154 of  
512 the acts of 2022, is hereby repealed.

513 SECTION 107. Said chapter 115 is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

514 Section 18. (a) The commissioner, in consultation with the commissioner of public health  
515 and the adjutant general of the Massachusetts national guard, shall contact all members of the  
516 Massachusetts national guard and all known veterans and members of the United States armed  
517 forces residing in the commonwealth who may be eligible to participate in the United States  
518 Department of Veterans Affairs' Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, including, but  
519 not limited, those who may have served in: (i) Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi  
520 Freedom or Operation New Dawn; (ii) Djibouti, Africa on or after September 11, 2001; (iii)  
521 Afghanistan on or after September 11, 2001; (iv) Operation Desert Shield or Operation Desert  
522 Storm; or (v) in the Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990. Veterans or  
523 service members contacted shall be encouraged to join the United States Department of Veterans  
524 Affairs' Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry and shall be provided with contact  
525 information for the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' Airborne Hazards and Open  
526 Burn Pit Registry and a copy of the informational pamphlet created by the commissioner of  
527 public health pursuant to subsection (b) of section 244 of chapter 111.

528 (b) The commissioner shall create a database of self-identifying service members and  
529 veterans who have been exposed to open burn pits or other airborne hazards, which shall include  
530 the name, address, electronic address, phone number, location and period of service and other  
531 information as deemed necessary. Such information shall be used only for the purposes of  
532 communicating information about exposure to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by

533 open burn pits or other airborne hazards to service members and veterans. The database,  
534 materials or other information shall be confidential and privileged, shall not be subject to chapter  
535 66, or clause Twenty-sixth of section 7 of chapter 4 and shall not be subject to subpoena,  
536 discovery or introduction into evidence in any private civil action.

537 SECTION 108. Section 9 of chapter 115A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022  
538 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 3, the words “home in the city of  
539 Chelsea” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- homes.

540 SECTION 109. Section 3 of chapter 115B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is  
541 hereby amended by striking out, in line 16, the words “home in the city of Chelsea; and the chair  
542 of the board of trustees of the veterans’ home in the city of Holyoke” and inserting in place  
543 thereof the following words:- veterans’ homes.

544 SECTION 110. Section 51B of chapter 119 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is  
545 hereby amended by striking out, in lines 17 and 18, the words “and (vi) all other pertinent facts  
546 or matters” and inserting in place thereof the following:- (vi) the military status of the parents,  
547 guardian or caregiver of the child and, if applicable, of the spouse or intimate partner of the  
548 parent, guardian or caregiver of the child; and (vii) all other pertinent facts or matters.

549 SECTION 111. Said section 51B of said chapter 119 is hereby further amended by  
550 adding the following subsection:-

551 (s) The department shall provide notice to appropriate military authorities about an  
552 allegation of an individual subject to a 51A report with a military status in accordance with  
553 section 69B.

554 SECTION 112. Said chapter 119 is hereby further amended by inserting after section  
555 69A the following section:-

556 Section 69B. (a) For the purposes of this section, “family advocacy program” shall mean  
557 the program established by the United States Department of Defense for the prevention of and  
558 response to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse and intimate partner violence in military  
559 families.

560 (b) The commissioner shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the family  
561 advocacy program at military installations located in the commonwealth with respect to 51A  
562 reports and data collected for the investigation pursuant to subsection (b) of section 51B and  
563 reported pursuant to military status pursuant to subsection (s) of section 51B. The memorandum  
564 of understanding shall establish procedures and protocols for matters, including, but not limited  
565 to: (i) identifying an individual subject to a 51A report as military personnel; (ii) identifying  
566 appropriate circumstances for reporting to the family advocacy program without reducing the  
567 likelihood of reporting or creating undue risk to the health or wellbeing of the spouse, intimate  
568 partner or child of the military personnel; (iii) reporting to the family advocacy program when an  
569 investigation implicating military personnel has been initiated; and (iv) maintaining  
570 confidentiality requirements under state and federal law.

571 SECTION 113. Subsection (c) of section 73B of chapter 272 of the General Laws, as  
572 appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 18, the second  
573 time it appears, and in line 23, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof, in each  
574 instance, the following words:- executive office.

575 SECTION 114. Section 11 of chapter 276A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is  
576 hereby amended by striking out, in lines 6 and 13 the words “the department” and inserting in  
577 place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- the executive office.

578 SECTION 115. Section 3 of chapter 71 of the acts of 1996, as amended by section 2 of  
579 chapter 468 of the acts of 2002, is hereby further amended by striking out the second and third  
580 paragraphs.

581 SECTION 116. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, any member  
582 of a retirement system who is a member in service and a veteran who failed to make the purchase  
583 authorized in paragraph (h) of subdivision (1) of section 4 of chapter 32 of the General Laws  
584 pursuant to chapter 71 of the acts of 1996, as amended, shall be given a 1-time opportunity to  
585 apply to the retirement system to make said purchase within 1 year from the effective date of this  
586 act. Each retirement system shall provide written notice to all members in service of their  
587 potential eligibility for this purchase within 90 days of the effective date of this act.

588 SECTION 117. (a) The secretary of veterans’ services, in coordination with the executive  
589 office of health and human services, shall convene a working group to review alternative  
590 therapies for mental health treatments for veterans. The working group shall: (i) study whether  
591 psychedelic therapy is associated with improved outcomes among veterans with diagnosed  
592 mental health disorders; (ii) evaluate literature, research trials and expert opinions to determine if  
593 psychedelic therapy is associated with improved outcomes regarding mental health treatment for  
594 veterans; and (iii) issue recommendations regarding the provision of psychedelic therapy to treat  
595 veterans with mental health disorders in Massachusetts. As used in this section, “psychedelic

596 therapy” shall mean the use of psilocybin, ketamine, or 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine,  
597 under the direction of a health care provider, to treat mental health disorders.

598 (b) The secretary shall appoint the following members of the working group: 2 members  
599 who shall represent medical centers or hospitals in the commonwealth that serve veterans; 2  
600 members who shall represent health insurance companies; 2 members who shall represent  
601 veterans’ services organizations; 1 member who shall represent an organization currently  
602 studying this subject matter; and such other members as the secretary deems necessary. The  
603 members of the working group shall have experience in behavioral health or veterans services.  
604 The secretary may designate a chair of the working group.

605 (c) Not later than January 1, 2025, the working group shall file a report of its findings and  
606 any recommendations with the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the joint  
607 committee on veterans and federal affairs, and the joint committee on mental health, substance  
608 use and recovery.

609 SECTION 118. Sections 12 to 15, inclusive, shall take effect on taxable years beginning  
610 on January 1, 2024.

611 SECTION 119. Sections 16 and 18 through 24, inclusive, shall take effect 6 months after  
612 the effective date of this act.

613 SECTION 120. Sections 45 and 85 shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

614 SECTION 121. Section 86 shall take effect on July 1, 2025.