

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:

SECTION 1. Section 34 of chapter 2 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 2, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Twenty-second I. In a city or town that accepts this clause and is certified by the commissioner to be assessing all property at full and fair cash valuation, an abatement granted pursuant clause Twenty-second, Twenty-second A, Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C, Twenty-second E or Twenty-second F shall be increased annually by an amount equal to the increase in the cost of living as determined by the Consumer Price Index for such year. The department of revenue shall annually inform each city or town that accepts this clause of the amount of this increase.

Twenty-second J. In a city or town that accepts this clause and is certified by the commissioner to be assessing all property at full and fair cash valuation, a taxpayer who otherwise qualifies for an exemption pursuant clause Twenty-second, Twenty-second A, Twenty-second B, Twenty-second C, Twenty-second E or Twenty-second F shall be granted an additional exemption that shall be uniform for all herein named exemptions and the amount of which shall not exceed 100 per cent of the exemption for which the taxpayer qualifies, as may be determined by the legislative body of the city or town, subject to its charter, not later than the beginning of the fiscal year to which the additional exemption shall commence. Once accepted,

the amount of the exemption shall continue until amended by the legislative body of the city or town. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary, the exemption shall be in addition to any exemption allowable pursuant to this section; provided, however, that in no instance shall the taxable valuation of the property, after all applicable exemptions, be reduced below 10 per cent of its full and fair cash valuation, except through the applicability of clause Eighteenth. Acceptance of this clause by a city or town shall not increase the amount that the city or town otherwise would have been reimbursed by the commonwealth pursuant to the clause. The additional exemption contained within this clause shall not be implemented in any year in which the city or town has also accepted the section 5C1/2 of chapter 59.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 18. Section 2 of chapter 90 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 172 to 186, inclusive, as so appearing, the words "pleasure passenger vehicles owned by veterans who, according to the records of the United States Veterans' Administration, has been determined to have a service-connected disability rating of 60 per cent or greater and by reason of service in the armed forces of the United States have suffered loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet; or loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; or permanent impairment of vision of both eyes of the following status: central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees in the better eye, or

any other disability or handicap of such veterans which may be determined by the medical advisory board as established by section eight C, and”.

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

SECTION 20. Said section 2 of said chapter 90 is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 246 to 258, inclusive, as so appearing, the words “and the words “Disabled Veteran” for a pleasure passenger vehicle or a pick-up truck owned or leased by and used by a veteran who, according to the records of the United States Veterans’ Administration, by reason of service in the armed forces of the United States has suffered loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet; or loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; or permanent impairment of vision of both eyes of the following status: central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye, or any other disability or handicap”.

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

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

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

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

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

(b) Any veteran meeting the definition of a veteran in clause forty-third of section 7 of chapter 4 or section 1 of chapter 115, or who is eligible for the annuity provided under section 6C of chapter 115, shall be eligible and entitled to a veteran plate which shall carry the denotation "VETERAN", upon presentation of satisfactory evidence of such status as determined by the registrar.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(i) Any plate to which an individual is entitled under this section shall be issued without fee other than the established registration fee for private passenger motor vehicles and motorcycles. The registrar may provide individuals the option of paying an additional fee. Any funds related to the additional fee generated under this section shall be distributed to the state-operated veterans' homes on an equal basis, to their special account, up to \$500,000 for

each home. Any excess fee over \$500,000 for each state-operated veterans' home shall be placed in the special trust fund subject to the control of the secretary of veterans' services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 105. Section 16 of said chapter 115, inserted by section 53 of chapter 126 of the acts of 2022, is hereby amended by inserting after the first sentence the following sentence:-

The veterans equality review board shall ensure that veterans receive state-based veteran benefits if they receive: (i) an other than honorable discharge because of sex, race, color, religious creed, national origin, age, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, disability; or (ii) any U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs category eligible for upgrade, including, but not limited to, mental health conditions, military sexual trauma and traumatic brain injury.

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

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

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

(b) The commissioner shall create a database of self-identifying service members and veterans who have been exposed to open burn pits or other airborne hazards, which shall include the name, address, electronic address, phone number, location and period of service and other information as deemed necessary. Such information shall be used only for the purposes of communicating information about exposure to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits or other airborne hazards to service members and veterans. The database, materials or other information shall be confidential and privileged, shall not be subject to chapter 66, or clause Twenty-sixth of section 7 of chapter 4 and shall not be subject to subpoena, discovery or introduction into evidence in any private civil action.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 113. Subsection (c) of section 73B of chapter 272 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 18, the second

time it appears, and in line 23, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following words:- executive office.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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