

PA 11-197

HB6259

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2011**

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PART 13
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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The House will reconvene immediately.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The House will come back to order. And will the Clerk, please call Calendar Number 5 -- 453.

THE CLERK:

On page 24, Calendar 453, House Bill Number 6259, AN ACT CONCERNING A STAFF IDENTIFICATION CARD FEE WAIVER FOR BLIND VETERANS, favorable reported, the Committee on Appropriations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Jack Hennessey.

REP. HENNESSEY (127th):

Mr. Speaker, I move for acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Question is on acceptance and joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. Will you remark?

REP. HENNESSEY (127th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill waives the fee imposed by the department of Motor Vehicles for the acquisition of a state identification card if the individual meets the requirements of being a veteran as defined in subsection 27-103 and blind.

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I move -- I ask that the House support the bill and vote for it. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Would you care to remark further on the bill?

Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill is a very good bill and should receive the support of the membership here. It doesn't affect too many veterans, but those that it does affect are well deserving of the fee elimination.

I urge the members of the House to support it as I will vote for it also. Thank you very much, Chairman.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Nicastro.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in strong support of this bill. It goes a long way to help our veterans who are disabled and it -- it relieves them of a slight cost. And I think my colleagues should

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join me on this and support this bill. Thank you,
Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Kirkley-Bey.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY (5th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I'm in support of this bill I keep saying to those individuals that sit on the Veteran's Committee why don't you ever do anything for the spouses of veterans? If the spouse of a veteran should become blind or disabled she should also have the right to have her fee waived as well as the veteran himself. And I think it would be very easy and thoughtful. I wonder how many women sit on this committee to have these things done on her behalf. After all she takes good care of her (sic) when he gets home. Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Would you care to remark further on the bill?

Would you care to remark further on the bill?

If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members, take their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Please check the roll call board to make sure your vote has been properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will please take a tally.

Clerk, please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill Number 6259.

Total number voting	144
Necessary for passage	73
Those voting yea	144
Those voting nay	0
Those absent and not voting	7.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill is passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 187.

THE CLERK:

On page number 9, Calendar 187, substitute for
House Bill Number 5415, AN ACT REQUIRING FULL

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

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SENATE

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June 8, 2011

are financially able to keep the paraprofessionals in the classrooms longer. If you don't have the money, then you have to limit the hours --

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR PRAGUE:

That these paraprofessionals can work.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Prague, I apologize, Senator Looney is standing.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President. Apologies to Senator Prague. Would ask that this item be passed temporarily and that the Clerk call from Calendar page 12, Calendar 555, House Bill 6259.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Madam President.

Calling from Calendar page 12, Calendar 555, House Bill Number 6259, AN ACT CONCERNING A STATE

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IDENTIFICATION CARD FEE WAIVER FOR BLIND VETERANS,
favorable report of the Veterans, Transportation and
Appropriations Committees.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE:

Thank you, Madam President and good evening to
you.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, sir.

SENATOR LEONE:

Madam President.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committees'
favorable report and passage of the bill in
concurrence with the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

Question is on passage of the bill.

Will you remark further, sir?

SENATOR LEONE:

Thank you, Madam President

What this bill -- it's pretty straightforward, as
we see by the -- by the category listed. This bill
authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles
Commissioner to waive the \$22.50 state identification

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card fee for any applicant who is a blind veteran. And obviously eligibility would be a veteran who is honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions from active service in the U.S. Armed Forces and also is considered blind if his or her central vision acuity does not exceed 2200 in the better eye with correcting lenses or if better than 2200 but is accompanied by a limitation in his or her fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle of no more than 20 degrees. I know that was very technical but basically if they can't see.

And with that, Madam President, I would ask my colleagues for their support in passage of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Will your remark further?

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President.

I, too, rise in support of this bill. It's a great bill. These men and women have served our country valiantly. We cannot do enough for them, and I think this bill is definitely within the spirit of

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the bill that this Chamber passed not too long ago where we allowed the marking the veteran notification on the driver's license. So I think it's wholly and consistent and I think it's a great step in honoring these noble people.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

If not, Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE:

If there is no objection to the bill, I would ask this be put on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

See no objections, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk, do you have any more on your Calendar?

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk would call, as the next item, Calendar page 8, Calendar 462, Senate Bill 1127?

THE CHAIR:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

Madam President, the items placed on the first Consent Calendar begin on Calendar page 10, Calendar Number 478, House Bill 6488; Calendar 480, House Bill 5256.

Calendar page 11, Calendar 513, substitute for House Bill 6557.

Calendar page 12, Calendar Number 535, substitute for House Bill 6226; Calendar 555, House Bill 6259.

Calendar page 13, Calendar 560, substitute for House Bill 5368; Calendar 567, substitute for House Bill 6157.

Calendar page 14, Calendar 574, substitute for House Bill 6410; Calendar 578, House Bill 6156.

Calendar page 15, Calendar 591, House Bill 6263; Calendar 594, substitute for House Bill 5508; Calendar 595, substitute for House Bill 62 -- 5263.

Calendar page 16, Calendar Number 606, substitute for House Bill 6581; Calendar 609, substitute for House Bill 6501.

Calendar page 17, Calendar 610, substitute for House Bill 6224; Calendar 613, substitute for House Bill 6453.

Calendar page 18, Calendar 614, substitute for House Bill 5068; Calendar 628, substitute for House Bill 5008; Calendars 633, House Bill 6489.

Calendar page 19, Calendar 635, substitute for House Bill 6351; Calendar 640, House Bills, 6559.

Calendar page 20, Calendar 642; House Bill 6595.

Calendar page 21, Calendar 645, substitute for House Bill 6267; Calendar 648, substitute for House Bill 5326; Calendar 650, substitute for House Bill 6344.

Calendar page 22, Calendar 651, substitute for House Bill 6540.

Calendar page 23, Calendar Number 655, substitute for House Bill 6497; Calendar 657, substitute for House Bill 6262; Calendar 658, House Bill 6364; Calendar 659, House Bill 5489.

Calendar page 24, Calendar 660, substitute for House Bill 6449.

Calendar page 36 -- correction -- Calendar page 33, Calendar Number 390, substitute for Senate Bill 1181.

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Calendar page 36, Calendar Number 481, House Bill
5472.

Calendar page 37, Calendar Number 584, substitute
for House Joint Resolution Number 34; Calendar 585,
substitute for House Joint Resolution Number 54;
Calendar 586, House Joint Resolution Number 65,
Calendar 587, House Joint Resolution Number 66.

Calendar page 38, Calendar 588, House Joint
Resolution Number 80; Calendar 589, House Joint
Resolution Number 63; Calendar 590, House Joint
Resolution Number 35; Calendar 620, substitute for
House Joint Resolution Number 45.

Calendar page 39, Calendar Number 621, substitute
for House Joint Resolution Number 47; Calendar 622,
House Joint Resolution Number 68; Calendar 623,
substitute for House Joint Resolution Number 69;
Calendar 624, substitute for House Joint Resolution
Number 73.

Calendar page 40, Calendar 625, substitute for
House Joint Resolution Number 81; Calendar 626, House
Joint Resolution Number 84.

Madam President, I believe that completes the
items placed on Consent Calendar Number 1.

THE CHAIR:

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Thank you.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote, and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll call on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll call on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gomes?

If all members have voted; all members have voted? The machine shall be locked.

And, Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar
Number 1.

Total number voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0

Those absent and not voting 0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar passes.

The Senate will stand at ease for a moment.

(Chamber at ease.)

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, Senator.

The Senate will come to order.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda Number 5 for today's session.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda Number 5, dated Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

Copies have been made available.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**SELECT
COMMITTEE
ON VETERANS'
AFFAIRS
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I laud the Department of Veterans' Affairs for trying to bring in younger people and be more inclusive with the composition of the board. Of course, AmVets is not on here, and they would like to be.

I notice that the Vietnam veterans are on here, and there are roughly 2,500 members of AmVets in the State of Connecticut, and they have the potential, actually, to represent a broader composition of veterans than any other organization in the state. So I would like to have you consider adding the AmVets on the bill. Thank you.

REP. HENNESY: Thank you for your testimony. Any comments or questions from the Committee? Seeing none, thank you, sir.

ROBERT HUNTER: Yes, sir.

REP. HENNESY: Debi Newton.

DEBBI NEWTON: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I, too, am wearing two hats but neither organization actually has hats, so I'll just make a verbal changeover.

HB5058 HB5272
SB854
HB5273 HB6259

I'm Debbi Newton. I'm the Legislative Chair of the National Guard Association of the State of Connecticut and I've served in that position for the last seven years and I am a 31-year member of the National Guard.

I'm here today to speak in favor of several bills before you. You have my written testimony so I'm just going to summarize. I know we've already been here a couple of hours. You probably want to get up and walk around yourselves.

The identification card bill, 371, we support that as well. We do have a lot of members. We have a lot of family members, a lot of veterans out there that fall into that in between where they've gotten out of the military but never retired so they don't have that card.

We do have, Massachusetts offers that as a benefit of being in the military up there. We have had, that I know of, at least six Connecticut guardsmen have moved over the line into Massachusetts just before they were getting ready to retire so that they can maintain their civilian job in Connecticut and still be able to visit family and friends without having to travel too far.

They may have moved a half an hour, but now they're not taxpayers in Connecticut of any kind. They're not consumers in Connecticut. They're living out of state and they're getting their military retirement pay 100 percent exempt.

That's all I have from the National Guard Association, and now I'm going to put on my other hat, which is only three months old and represent the newly formed, Connecticut Veterans and Military Coalition, which is a coalition of approximately 20 veterans and military groups in the State of Connecticut that have come together representing over 400,000 veterans, retirees, service members, their survivors and their families.

You have the written testimony. A couple of it mirror pretty much word for word what I've already spoken about on others, but I would like to talk about Raised House Bill 6259 AN ACT CONCERNING A STATE IDENTIFICATION CARD WAIVER FOR BLIND VETERANS.

Many of them have to give up their driver's license when they become blind, obviously. We don't want them on the road. But then they have to pay, and many times our blind veterans are blind because of service related.

And if we can just waive, I believe it's what, a \$10 fee or the last time I checked for a state ID card for our blind veterans. They're unable to work in many cases and their funds are even more limited, and this is something that Connecticut

Veterans and Military Coalition would like to see done.

And pending any questions, that is all I have.

REP. HENNESSY: Thank you. Any questions or comments from the Committee? Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI: Yes. On the exemption on the pensions of the veterans, it goes, from my recollection, I've been involved with that for years also.

HB 5273

My recollection is not only do people move to save paying the tax, but we also lose some very good talent in the state for the job market. Today in the military, the Navy, the Air Force, the Army, you get high technical training that's very, very useful out in our industry in this state and we lose those people.

So I think giving them the tax benefit we'd probably triple our return on what they would give back to the state. It wouldn't be costing us a nickel. So I fully support you. Thank you.

DEBBI NEWTON: And we're actually seeing, to a limited degree, some younger reservists and guards members are moving out of state earlier because they're looking at the benefits other states are giving and they're going to go where they can get the best benefits that they can get. They're looking at raising a family and how they're going to do it in this economy and they're going where they're getting the better benefits.

REP. HENNESSY: Thank you. So that, we have exhausted the sign up list. Is there anybody else that would like to come up and speak before we close?

Seeing not, the public hearing is now closed. Thank you.



Connecticut Veterans & Military Coalition
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Feb. 10, 2011

**Testimony in Favor of Proposed Senate Bill 371,
Raised House Bills 5273 and 6259**

Good Morning Sen. Maynard, Representative Hennessy and members of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs. I am Debbi Newton, Legislative Liaison for the newly formed Connecticut Veterans & Military Coalition. The CVMC is an organization of about 20 groups such as the National Guard Association of Connecticut, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, The Military Order of the Purple Heart, The Marine Corps Association, Association of the US Army and ESGR to name but a few. We held our first meeting in December and have organized to provide one voice here at the State Legislature as well as on Capitol Hill in Washington. We represent more than 400,000 Veterans, Retirees, Servicemembers and their families and survivors.

I am here today to speak in favor of three of the bills before you.

Proposed Senate Bill 371, An Act Concerning Identification Cards for Veterans is something that would be of very little cost to the state but would reap dividends for our Veterans. Not all Veterans remain in the military service long enough to retire and receive the Retiree ID cards. Several stores, restaurants and other businesses offer discounts to Military members, Veterans and Retirees, but without a photo ID identifying someone as a Veteran, they are not able to take advantage of these discounts. It may be a small thing, but it is a big thing to our Veterans to let them know they are still appreciated for the sacrifices they and their families have made. Many individuals within our member organizations would benefit from passage of this bill.

House Bill 5273 is also a bill you have had before you numerous times. This is An Act Exempting Military Retirement Pay from the State Income Tax. Several years ago, the Legislature passed an Act that exempted 50% of such pay from the state income tax. Many states, including Massachusetts already exempt 100% of military retirement pay from the state income taxes. We have several Connecticut Guardsmen that I know of who have purchased homes in Massachusetts so when they retire, they can get that exemption. They are still able to work their civilian jobs in Connecticut and are still close to family and friends, but we are losing good citizens, consumers and taxpayers to another state because they offer what we don't. Many of the individual members of our member organizations are retirees and we fully support passage of this bill. We do realize that times are tough economically for the state, but so are they for the residents of this state.

Finally, **Raised House Bill 6259**, An Act Concerning a State Identification Card Fee Waiver for Blind Veterans is a concept the CVMC brought to you this year and we thank you for raising it and bringing it to public hearing. Our blind Veterans have given up driving licenses, not because they wanted to, but because they have lost their eyesight, many as a result of their service to our state and country. They may have been given waivers of drivers license fees, but now that they have lost their eyesight and still need a government issued id, they are required to pay for those ids. Coupled with the fact that right now, there are no id cards issued for Veterans that may not be retired from the service, our blind Veterans now have no way of identifying themselves as Veterans and also have to pay for government issued identification. We believe they have sacrificed enough, given enough, and should be given the state identification cards at no cost to them.

I thank you for your time and for what you do for the Veterans, Military Members and Retirees of Connecticut and their families. This concludes my testimony and I am available for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Debbi Newton
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