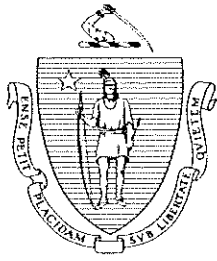


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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE • BOSTON, MA 02133
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MAURA T. HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

November 9, 2023

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

I am pleased to submit for your consideration *An Act Honoring, Empowering, and Recognizing our Servicemembers and Veterans*.

On March 1, 2023, our administration established the Executive Office of Veterans Services (EOVS), reaffirming our commitments to veterans who have sacrificed and served their nation, and to provide an increased level of oversight, accountability, and professionalism. This important step was made possible because of the leadership of the Legislature, and we are grateful for their partnership in our efforts to improve veteran services across the state.

The Healey-Driscoll administration has completed a robust engagement process to better understand the legislative and programmatic priorities of the veteran community. I am proud to say that the administration has engaged with over 75 Veterans Service Officers representing over 100 municipalities, heard from over 30 nonprofit partners, and conducted a 50-state review of veteran policy and legislative efforts. The legislation I am filing today consists of proposals aimed at expanding veterans' benefits, increasing inclusivity, and modernizing services.

The legislation will increase benefits and opportunities for veterans, including by:

1. Increasing the annuity paid to disabled veterans, surviving spouses, or Gold Star parents from \$2,000 to \$2,500.
2. Allowing veterans who lack other options to be reimbursed for behavioral health services.
3. Increasing the tax credit for employers who hire eligible veterans from \$2,000 to \$2,500.
4. Giving municipalities options to increase property tax exemptions for veterans, by doubling the existing exemption for veterans alone and/or tying the exemption to inflation.
5. Lengthening the timeframe in which veterans in public service can pay to have up to four years of active-duty service time count toward their state retirement.

This legislation will redouble our commitment to inclusivity and greater representation of all our veterans, including by:

1. Broadening the definition of veteran by aligning the state Chapter 115 program definition of a veteran with the United States Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) definition, allowing EOVS to serve more veterans.
2. Expanding the scope of the Veterans Equality Review Board to allow individuals discharged on the basis of additional protected classes (including race/ethnicity, color, religious creed, national origin, age, and disability) to become eligible for state veterans benefits.
3. Providing, through a two-year pilot program, in vitro fertilization (IVF) reimbursement to disabled same-sex women veterans who have been denied IVF reimbursement by the VA solely because they are in a same-sex marriage.

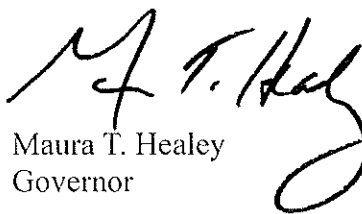
And this legislation will modernize our approach to serving veterans, including by:

1. Revising Chapter 115 and 115A to ensure gender neutral and inclusive language while removing antiquated references.
2. Creating a public-private working group to study the health benefits of psychedelics as treatment for veterans suffering physical or mental disorders related to their service.

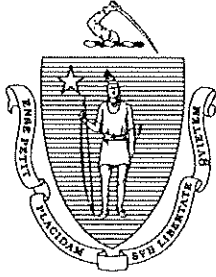
Our veterans answered the call to serve our state and country, and they deserve the utmost dignity, respect, and support for their service. This bill reaffirms the Commonwealth's commitment to supporting all of our servicemembers and their families.

I urge your favorable consideration of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura T. Healey
Governor



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY THREE

AN ACT HONORING, EMPOWERING, AND RECOGNIZING OUR SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS.

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. Subsection (d) of section 16DD of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 29, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

SECTION 3. Section 105 of said chapter 6A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 1, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

SECTION 4. 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 5. Subsection (k) of section 61 of said chapter 7, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 124 to 125, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

SECTION 6. Paragraph 2 of 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 7. Section 49 of chapter 31 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 14 to 15, the words “in the City of Chelsea”.

SECTION 8. Subsection (h) of said section 4 of said chapter 32, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the words “United States shall be”, in lines 148 to 149, the following words:- provided written notice by the retirement board upon entry into service that they are.

SECTION 9. Said subsection (h) of 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 10. 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 section 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 section 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 said section 5; 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 of said section 5. Acceptance of this section by a city or town shall not increase the amount that it otherwise would have been reimbursed by the commonwealth pursuant to the respective clause. The additional exemption contained within this section shall not be implemented in any year in which the city or town has also accepted the section 5C1/2 of chapter 59.

SECTION 11. Paragraph (1) of subsection (u) of section 6 of chapter 62 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 1113, the figure "2,000" and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 2,500.

SECTION 12. Paragraph (4) of said subsection (u) of said section 6 of said chapter 62, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 1130, the figure "2,000" and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 2,500.

SECTION 13. Subsection (a) of 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 14. Subsection (d) of said section 38GG of said chapter 63, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 24, the figure "2,000" and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 2,500.

SECTION 15. 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, or permanent loss of use of, both legs or both arms or one leg and one 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 in order to receive the exemption from the tax in this paragraph. A person issued a purple heart recipient plate and a disability placard shall receive the exemption from the tax in this subsection.

SECTION 16. 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 the following words:- executive office.

SECTION 17. Section 2 of chapter 90 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out 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 18. 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 19. Said section 2 of said chapter 90, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out 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 20. Said section 2 of said chapter 90, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the twelfth paragraph.

SECTION 21. Said section 2 of said chapter 90, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the fifteenth through seventeenth, inclusive, paragraphs.

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

SECTION 23. Chapter 90 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 21 the following section:-

Section 2J. (a) The registrar is hereby authorized, required, and directed to 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. 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 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.

(b) Veterans ranked as at least 60 per cent disabled by the United States Veterans Administration, 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.

(c) 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.

(d) Veterans who are members of the Legion of Valor of the United States Inc. shall be entitled to a distinctive plate recognizing that status. Residents of the commonwealth 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.

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

(f) 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."

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

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

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

(j) 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.

(k) A veteran who has served in the armed forces and is entitled to veteran plate shall also be entitled to the issuance of a decal or emblem denoting their branch of service.

(l) Owners of private vehicles awarded a decoration for valor or gallantry, as defined herein, shall be entitled to a distinctive veteran plate or emblem or decal denoting their award status. The awards references in this paragraph shall be as follows: the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Distinguish Service Cross, the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, and any other similar award designated by the secretary of veterans' services under the auspices of section 1 of chapter 115.

(m) A resident of the commonwealth qualifying as a Gold Star parent, child, sibling, grandchild or spouse shall be entitled to either a distinctive plate or an emblem or decal denoting their status. A distinctive plate, under this paragraph, may not be used in conjunction with a motor vehicle which has promotional or advertising material thereupon. A Gold Star Family member is defined as a parent, child, spouse, sibling or grandchild of a member of the armed forces who is killed in action.

(n) 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.

(o) Under any special recognition or status recognized in this section, the widowed person may 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, the widowed person may nonetheless apply in the stead of their deceased spouse.

(p) Any special status under this section shall entitle the bearer to only one special plate, emblem, or decal. However, 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.

(q) 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 fees generated under this section shall be distributed to the state-operated veterans' homes on an equal basis, to their special account, up to one-half million dollars for each home. Any excess shall be placed in the special trust fund subject to the control of the secretary of veterans' services.

SECTION 24. Subsection (a) of section 244 of chapter 111 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 2, the word "commissioner" and inserting in place thereof the following word:- secretary.

SECTION 25. Subsection (b) of said section 244 of said chapter 111, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 28, 35 and 38, each time it appears, the word "commissioner" and inserting in place thereof the following word:- secretary.

SECTION 26. Subsection (c) of said section 244 of said chapter 111, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 43, the word "department's" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office's.

SECTION 27. Said subsection (c) of said section 244 of said chapter 111, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 43, the word "department" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

SECTION 28. Section 1 of chapter 115 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 3 to 4, the words "wife, husband, widow, widower, mother or father" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- spouse, widowed person or parent.

SECTION 29. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 6, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the veteran's.

SECTION 30. Said section 1 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 8 to 16, inclusive, the words "such child is attending school for the purpose of completing a regulation high school course or its equivalent, or unless he is mentally or physically unable to support himself, and his disability existed before he attained that age, or unless he is under twenty-three years of age, and is a full-time student at an educational institution which maintains a regular faculty and curriculum and has a regularly organized body of students in attendance at the place where its educational activities are carried on" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- 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 31. 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 the following word:- their.

SECTION 32. 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 33. 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) was a veteran as defined in clause Forty-third, section 7 of chapter 4; or (b) served on active duty, to include active duty solely for training purposes, 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 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 34. 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 35. 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 36. 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 the following word:- the.

SECTION 37. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 8, 12, 20, 66, 75, 103, 123, 131, 139 and 150, each time it appears, the word "He" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- The secretary.

SECTION 38. 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 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 13, 14, 61, 76, 118, 125, 129, 134 and 142, each time it appears, the word "he" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the secretary.

SECTION 40. Said section 2 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the sixth paragraph.

SECTION 41. 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 the following word:- a.

SECTION 42. 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 43. 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 over and above other benefits under 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 chapter. The medical assistance benefit shall include but not be limited to covering the cost of those necessary medical visits, procedures, prescriptions and costs. 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 over and above other benefits under 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 chapter. The behavioral health assistance benefit shall include but 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 over and above other benefits under 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 chapter. The dental assistance benefit shall include but not be limited to covering the cost of those necessary medical visits, procedures, prescriptions and costs. The secretary shall, by regulation or otherwise, make provision to keep the program efficient and economical.

SECTION 44. 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 the following word:- a.

SECTION 45. Section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 17, the following word:- his.

SECTION 46. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 18, the following words:- civil war.

SECTION 47. 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 48. 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 49. 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 50. 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 51. Said section 3 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 24, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the veteran's.

SECTION 52. 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 the following words:- the agent.

SECTION 53. 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 the following word:- the.

SECTION 54. 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 55. 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 56. Section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 2, the word "he" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the veteran.

SECTION 57. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 3, the word "he" and inserting in place thereof the following word:- they.

SECTION 58. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 4, 7, 16, 25, 26, 43, 45, 51, 54, 59, 62, 63 and 66, each time it appears, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof the following word:- their.

SECTION 59. 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 60. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 22 and 27, each time it appears, the word "him" and inserting in place thereof the following word:- them.

SECTION 61. 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 62. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out in lines 39 and 54, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the veteran's.

SECTION 63. 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 64. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 55, the word "he" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the veteran.

SECTION 65. 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 66. 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 67. 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 68. Said section 5 of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 74, the word "him" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- them.

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 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 lines 102 and 103, each time it appears, the word "his" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- the veteran's.

SECTION 73. 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 74. 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 75. Section 5A of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 2, 8, 11, 40, 57, 60, and 63 to 64, each time they appear, the words "mother or father" and inserting in place thereof the following word:- parent.

SECTION 76. 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 77. 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 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 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 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 appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, 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 the following figure:- 2,250.

SECTION 86. Said section 6B of said chapter 115, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 19, 28 and 35, each time it appears, the figure "2,250" and inserting in place thereof 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 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 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 of the General Laws, as so appearing, 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 Agawam and the Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery located in Winchendon, and may add new locations, subject to the availability of funds, to meet veterans and dependents' needs. This authority includes, but is not 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 chapter 115 of the General Laws, 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 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, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the first sentence the following sentence:- The veterans equality review board shall also ensure that veterans who received an other than honorable discharge because of sex, race, color, religious creed, national origin, age, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, disability or 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, receive state-based veteran benefits.

SECTION 106. Section 9 of chapter 115A of the General Laws, as so appearing, 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 107. 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 word:- homes.

SECTION 108. Subsection (c) of section 73B of chapter 272 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 18 and 23, each time it appears, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

SECTION 109. Section 11 of chapter 276A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 6 and 13, each time it appears, the word “department” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- executive office.

SECTION 110. 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 amended by striking out the second paragraph.

SECTION 111. 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 within the required 180 days 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 years 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 112. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, 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.

The secretary shall appoint the following members of the working group: 2 members who shall represent medical centers or hospitals in Massachusetts that serve veterans; 2 members who shall represent health insurance companies; 2 members who shall represent veteran-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 veteran services. The secretary may designate a chair of the working group.

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

SECTION 113. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the executive office of veterans’ services shall administer a 2-year pilot program to offer reimbursement to veterans who: (i) have a service-related injury that necessitates treatment for infertility through in vitro fertilization; (ii) reside in the commonwealth; and (iii) would otherwise be eligible to receive coverage for that treatment by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs but have been denied coverage solely due to being married to a spouse of the same sex.

(b) Eligible veterans seeking coverage under this section shall submit appropriate documentation, as the executive office requires, which may include, but not be limited to, proof of denial of coverage from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and medical documentation supporting the need for treatment. Any information provided under this section to the executive office shall be held confidential consistent with federal and state law.

(c) The executive office may contract with a vendor to facilitate the program and develop policies or procedures required for the administration of this section.

(d) There shall be a working group to review and advise the executive office on the pilot program. The secretary of the executive office of veterans’ services shall assess and determine who will be on the working group, and at least one member shall be a veteran who shall represent the interest of same sex couples.

The working group shall advise on matters including, but not limited to, the following: (i) the implementation of the pilot program; (ii) the potential long-term funding strategies to provide reimbursement for in vitro fertilization for the population of veterans described in subsection (a); and (iii) any additional areas where veterans receive disparate access to health care services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, not limited to sexual orientation or marital status.

(e) Not later than 3 months after the conclusion of the pilot program, the executive office shall post a report on its website which describes the activities of the pilot program and all the working group's recommendations.

SECTION 114. Sections 43 and 85 shall take effect as of July 1, 2024.

SECTION 115. Section 86 shall take effect as of July 1, 2025.

SECTION 116. Sections 15 and 17 through 23, inclusive, shall take effect 6 months from the effective date of this act.