



*Testimony before the Veterans Affairs Committee
Submitted by the Department of Social Services
March 8, 2022*

S.B. 337 - AN ACT CONCERNING FEDERAL VETERANS' BENEFITS AND INCOME ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS FOR CERTAIN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

This bill requires the Department of Social Services to disregard all federal benefits issued by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to a veteran for the purposes of determining eligibility for most of the programs administered by the Department, including Medicaid, Medicare Savings Program, State Supplement for the Aged, Blind and Disabled, State Administered General Assistance, Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, and energy assistance. This new disregard would be in addition to the Aid and Attendance pension disregard currently afforded by the Department.

If the Department were to disregard the income from all VA-administered benefits, it would result in increased eligibility, increased caseloads, and an increase in expenditures in each of the programs involved. Currently, there are approximately 30,000 veterans in Connecticut receiving federal compensation and pension benefits administered by the VA, which represent just a portion of the larger set of federal benefits DSS is directed to disregard as part of the bill.

While the Department appreciates the intent of this bill, the required funds for such increases are not in place nor are they included in the Governor's proposed budget. As a result, the Department cannot support this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written remarks on S.B. 337.