



*Written Testimony before the Committee on Veteran's Affairs
Submitted by the Department of Social Services
February 14, 2019*

S.B. 801 (RAISED) - AN ACT EXPANDING CERTAIN VETERANS' ACCESS TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

While the Connecticut Department of Social Services (Department) appreciates the intent of this bill, it raises some concerns. This bill requires the Department to disregard all non-service-connected pension benefits issued by the federal government to a veteran, for the majority of DSS programs. This new pension disregard would be in addition to the aid and attendance pension disregard currently afforded by the Department.

This bill also instructs the Department to seek approval of an amendment to the Medicaid state plan or a waiver that would allow the Department to exempt these pension benefits from income eligibility determinations as unreimbursed medical expenses.

If the Department were to disregard the income from these pensions, it would result in increased eligibility, increased caseloads, and an increase in expenditures. The required funds for such increases are not in place or available at this time. Given the current fiscal climate, it is not anticipated that there will be funds included in the budget to support these additions; therefore, the Department cannot support this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written remarks on S.B. 801.