

Brave Act Conference Report Summary

- Designates the 5th day of April as Gold Star Wives Day and the last Sunday in September as Gold Star Mothers and Families Day;
- Re-write of veterans' bonus program administered by the Treasurer to allow for the maximum amount of benefits under the program subject to appropriation
- Develops a Massachusetts Veterans and Warriors Agriculture Program;
- Prohibits any hiring authority, employer or civil service for requiring, asking for or accepting by a hiring authority or employer medical or service records if the character of service is listed as other than dishonorable;
- Provides creditable service to members of the Commissioned Officers of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who are considered veterans by the federal government;
- Clarifying language from HOME Act provision granting paid military leave for servicemembers engaged in training and operations from 34 to 40 days;
- Clarifying language from the HOME Act provision defining calendar day for purposes of paid military leave;
- Clarifying language from the HOME Act provision further defining "base military pay" for the purposes of paid military leave;
- Directs cities and towns to designate reserved parking for veterans at city and town halls;
- Changes eligibility requirements for veterans' property tax exemptions from residing in the Commonwealth for 5 consecutive years to residing in the Commonwealth for 2 consecutive years;
- Increases veterans tax work-off program from \$1,000 to \$1,500
- Allows cities and towns, by acceptance to increase veterans tax abatements annually not to exceed the increase in the cost of living adjustment;
- Technical fix in the Municipal Modernization Act extending exemptions to veterans who are not owners of their domicile because legal title is held by a trustee, conservator, or other fiduciary for their benefit;
- Adds Prisoners of War (POW's) to the list of eligible Veterans for property tax abatements;
- Allows parents or surviving guardians of veterans, who died in service to the country, to receive a real estate credit on property beginning Jan. 1, 2019;

- Adds Reserve component to excise tax waiver;
- Allows Gold Star Plates for commercial vehicles;
- Requires the Department of Veterans Services to maintain and publish a list of law firms and organizations that provide pro bono legal representation for veterans;
- Veterans housing reimbursements for transitional and institutional housing;
- Exempts any veteran receiving an annuity through the Commonwealth from declaring such payments as income for the purposes of calculating eligibility for any state programs or services;
- Excludes from income in the month received, Veterans' pension income if the veteran pension would not be payable without entitlement to the Aid and Attendance allowance;
- Increases burial expenses for indigent veterans from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for a funeral costing \$5,000 or less;
- Prohibits cities or towns from charging a veteran a fee greater than the fee charged to a resident of that town for shell fishing permits;
- Provides time off for veterans for Veterans and Memorial Day, with or without pay, at the discretion of the employer;
- Repeals Valor Act Diversion Program;
- Veterans DIVERSION
- Authorizes recipients of the Bronze Star to be eligible for the Bronze Star Plate through the Registry of Motor Vehicles;
- National Guard as Veterans Feasibility Study;
- Veterans Higher Education Study;
- Veterans Incarceration Study;
- Veterans Creditable Service Study;
- Directs the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to develop a report to the Legislature outlining all costs associated with, and reimbursements available to, veterans relative to emergency medical transportation to non-VA facilities;
- Veterans Court and Diversion Study