

2025 -- H 5387

LC001261

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- RHODE ISLAND VETERANS'
HOME

Introduced By: Representatives Azzinaro, Fellela, Casimiro, Ackerman, Donovan,
Hopkins, Hull, J. Lombardi, Newberry, and Kennedy

Date Introduced: February 07, 2025

Referred To: House Veterans` Affairs

(Office of Veterans Services)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 30-24-1 and 30-24-10 of the General Laws in Chapter 30-24 entitled
2 "Rhode Island Veterans' Home" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **30-24-1. Management and control.**

4 The management and control of the Rhode Island veterans' home, established in this state
5 for those who served in the army, navy, marine corps, coast guard, merchant marines, ~~or~~ air force
6 [or space force](#) of the United States in any war or conflict and were honorably discharged therefrom,
7 who shall be in need of such care as is provided at the home, shall be the responsibility of the
8 director of human services, or his or her designee.

9 **30-24-10. Admissible to home — Fees.**

10 (a) Any person who has served in the army, navy, marine corps, coast guard, ~~or~~ air force
11 [or space force](#) of the United States for a period of ninety (90) days or more and that period began
12 or ended during any foreign war in which the United States shall have been engaged or in any
13 expedition or campaign for which the United States government issues a campaign medal, and who
14 was honorably discharged from it, and who shall be deemed to be in need of care provided at the
15 Rhode Island veterans' home, may be admitted to that facility subject to such rules and regulations
16 as shall be adopted by the director of human services to govern the admission of applicants to the
17 facility. Any person who has served in the armed forces of the United States designated herein and
18 otherwise qualified, who has served less than the ninety-day (90) period described in this section,

1 and who was honorably discharged from service, and who, as a result of the service, acquired a
2 service-connected disability or disease, may be admitted. No person shall be admitted to the facility
3 unless the person has been accredited to the enlistment or induction quota of the state or has resided
4 in the state for at least two (2) consecutive years next prior to the date of the application for
5 admission to the facility.

6 (b)(1) The director shall, at the end of each fiscal year, determine the net, per-diem
7 expenses of maintenance of residents in the facility and shall assess against each resident who has
8 "net income", as defined in this section, a fee equal to eighty percent (80%) of the resident's net
9 income, provided that fee shall not exceed the actual cost of care and maintenance for the resident;
10 and provided that an amount equal to twenty percent (20%) of the maintenance fee assessed shall
11 be allocated to, and deposited in, the veterans' restricted account. For the purposes of this section,
12 "net income" is defined as gross income minus applicable federal and state taxes and minus:

13 (i) An amount equal to one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) per month of residency and fifty
14 percent (50%) of any sum received due to wounds incurred under battle conditions for which the
15 resident received the purple heart; and

16 (ii) The amount paid by a resident for the support and maintenance of his or her spouse,
17 parent(s), minor child(ren), or child(ren) who is/are blind or permanently and totally disabled as
18 defined in title XVI of the Federal Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1381 — 1383d, subject to a
19 maximum amount to be determined by rules and regulations as shall be adopted by the director.

20 (2) The fees shall be paid monthly to the home and any failure to make payment when due
21 shall be cause for dismissal from the facility. Prior to dismissal, the resident shall be afforded
22 administrative due process.

23 (c) Admissions to the veterans' home shall be made without discrimination as to race,
24 color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity
25 or expression, assets, or income.

26 (d) Laundry services shall be provided to the residents of the Rhode Island veterans' home
27 at no charge to the residents, with such funds to cover the cost of providing laundry services for
28 residents of the Rhode Island veterans' home derived from monies appropriated to the department
29 of human services.

30 SECTION 2. Section 30-25-14 of the General Laws in Chapter 30-25 entitled "Burial of
31 Veterans" is hereby amended to read as follows:

32 **30-25-14. Rhode Island veterans' memorial cemetery.**

33 (a) The Rhode Island veterans' memorial cemetery, located on the grounds of the Joseph
34 H. Ladd school in the town of Exeter, shall be under the management and control of the director of

1 the department of human services. The director of the department of human services shall appoint
2 an administrator for the Rhode Island veterans' memorial cemetery who shall be an honorably
3 discharged veteran of the United States Armed Forces and shall have the general supervision over,
4 and shall prescribe rules for, the government and management of the cemetery. The administrator
5 shall make all needful rules and regulations governing the operation of the cemetery and generally
6 may do all things necessary to ensure the successful operation thereof. The director shall
7 promulgate rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the provisions of 38 U.S.C. § 2402, to
8 govern the eligibility for burial in the Rhode Island veterans' memorial cemetery. In addition to all
9 persons eligible for burial pursuant to rules and regulations established by the director, any person
10 who served in the army, navy, air force, ~~or~~ marine corps, coast guard, or space force of the United
11 States for a period of not less than two (2) years and whose service was terminated honorably, shall
12 be eligible for burial in the Rhode Island veterans' memorial cemetery. The director shall appoint
13 and employ all subordinate officials and persons needed for the proper management of the
14 cemetery. National guard members who are killed in the line of duty or who are honorably
15 discharged after completion of at least six (6) years of service in the Rhode Island national guard
16 and/or reserve and their spouse shall be eligible for interment in the Rhode Island veterans'
17 memorial cemetery. National guard members and/or reservists who are honorably discharged after
18 completion of at least six (6) years of service with another state, and who are a Rhode Island
19 resident for at least two (2) consecutive years immediately prior to death, shall be eligible, along
20 with their spouse, for interment in the Rhode Island veterans' memorial cemetery. For the purpose
21 of computing service under this section, honorable service in the active forces or reserves shall be
22 considered toward the six (6) years of national guard service. The general assembly shall make an
23 annual appropriation to the department of human services to provide for the operation and
24 maintenance for the cemetery. The director shall charge and collect a grave liner fee per interment
25 of the eligible spouse and/or eligible dependents of the qualified veteran, national guard member,
26 and/or reservist equal to the department's cost for the grave liner.

27 (b) No domestic animal shall be allowed on the grounds of the Rhode Island veterans'
28 memorial cemetery, whether at large or under restraint, except for seeing eye guide dogs, hearing
29 ear signal dogs or any other service animal, as required by federal law or any personal assistance
30 animal, as required by chapter 9.1 of title 40. Any person who violates the provisions of this section
31 shall be subject to a fine of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500).

32 (c) The state of Rhode Island office of veterans services shall bear the cost of all tolls
33 incurred by any motor vehicles that are part of a veteran's funeral procession, originating from
34 Aquidneck Island ending at the veterans' memorial cemetery, for burial or internment. The

1 executive director of the turnpike and bridge authority shall assist in the administration and
2 coordination of this toll reimbursement program.

3 SECTION 3. Section 34-12-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 34-12 entitled
4 "Acknowledgments and Notarial Acts" is hereby amended to read as follows:

5 **34-12-5. Power of armed forces officers to take acknowledgments.**

6 In addition to the acknowledgment of instruments and the performance of other notarial
7 acts in the manner and form and as otherwise authorized by law, instruments may be acknowledged,
8 documents attested, oaths and affirmations administered, depositions and affidavits executed, and
9 other notarial acts performed, before or by any commissioned officer in active service of the armed
10 forces of the United States with the rank of second lieutenant or higher in the army, air force, ~~or~~
11 marine corps, or space force, or with the rank of ensign or higher in the navy or coast guard, or with
12 equivalent rank in any other component part of the armed forces of the United States, by any person
13 without the limits of the United States, and to any person who is a member of the armed forces who
14 is within or without the limits of the United States and their lawful dependents.

15 SECTION 4. Section 34-37-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 34-37 entitled "Rhode Island
16 Fair Housing Practices Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

17 **34-37-3. Definitions.**

18 When used in this chapter:

19 (1) "Age" means anyone over the age of eighteen (18).

20 (2) "Armed forces" means the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Merchant
21 Marines, ~~or~~ Air Force, or Space Force of the United States and the Rhode Island National Guard.

22 (3) "Commission" means the Rhode Island commission for human rights created by § 28-
23 5-8.

24 (4) "Disability" means a disability as defined in § 42-87-1.

25 Provided, further, that the term "disability" does not include current, illegal use of, or
26 addiction to, a controlled substance, as defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802.

27 (5) "Discriminate" includes segregate, separate, or otherwise differentiate between or
28 among individuals because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or
29 expression, marital status, lawful source of income, military status as a veteran with an honorable
30 discharge or an honorable or general administrative discharge, servicemember in the armed forces,
31 country of ancestral origin, disability, age, housing status, or familial status or because of the race,
32 color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, lawful source
33 of income, military status as a veteran with an honorable discharge or an honorable or general
34 administrative discharge, servicemember in the armed forces, country of ancestral origin, disability,

1 age, housing status, or familial status of any person with whom they are, or may wish to be,
2 associated.

3 (6) The term “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this chapter shall have the same meaning
4 as that set forth in § 15-15-1 and include all forms of domestic violence as set forth in § 12-29-2,
5 except that the domestic abuse need not involve a minor or parties with minor children.

6 (7)(i) “Familial status” means one or more individuals who have not attained the age of
7 eighteen (18) years being domiciled with:

8 (A) A parent or another person having legal custody of the individual or individuals; or

9 (B) The designee of the parent or other person having the custody, with the written
10 permission of the parent or other person, provided that, if the individual is not a relative or legal
11 dependent of the designee, that the individual shall have been domiciled with the designee for at
12 least six (6) months.

13 (ii) The protections afforded against discrimination on the basis of familial status shall
14 apply to any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of any individual
15 who has not attained the age of eighteen (18) years.

16 (8) The terms, as used regarding persons with disabilities, “auxiliary aids and services,”
17 “reasonable accommodation,” and “reasonable modifications” have the same meaning as those
18 terms are defined in § 42-87-1.1.

19 (9) The term “gender identity or expression” includes a person’s actual or perceived
20 gender, as well as a person’s gender identity, gender-related self image, gender-related appearance,
21 or gender-related expression; whether or not that gender identity, gender-related self image, gender-
22 related appearance, or gender-related expression is different from that traditionally associated with
23 the person’s sex at birth.

24 (10) “Housing accommodation” includes any building or structure, or portion of any
25 building or structure, or any parcel of land, developed or undeveloped, that is occupied or is
26 intended, designed, or arranged to be occupied, or to be developed for occupancy, as the home or
27 residence of one or more persons.

28 (11) “Otherwise qualified” includes any person with a disability who, with respect to the
29 rental of property, personally or with assistance arranged by the person with a disability, is capable
30 of performing all the responsibilities of a tenant as contained in § 34-18-24.

31 (12) “Owner” includes any person having the right to sell, rent, lease, or manage a housing
32 accommodation.

33 (13) “Person” includes one or more individuals, partnerships, associations, organizations,
34 corporations, labor organizations, mutual companies, joint stock companies, trusts, receivers, legal

1 representatives, trustees, other fiduciaries, or real estate brokers or real estate salespersons as
2 defined in chapter 20.5 of title 5.

3 (14) “Senior citizen” means a person sixty-two (62) years of age or older.

4 (15) The term “sexual orientation” means having, or being perceived as having, an
5 orientation for heterosexuality, bisexuality, or homosexuality.

6 (16) The term “victim” means a family or household member and all other persons
7 contained within the definition of those terms as defined in § 12-29-2.

8 (17) The term “housing status” means the status of having or not having a fixed or regular
9 residence, including the status of living on the streets or in a homeless shelter or similar temporary
10 residence.

11 (18) The term “lawful source of income” means and includes any income, benefit, or
12 subsidy derived from child support; alimony; Social Security; Supplemental Security Income; any
13 other federal, state, or local public assistance program, including, but not limited to, medical or
14 veterans assistance; any federal, state, or local rental assistance or housing subsidy program,
15 including Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers as authorized by 42 U.S.C. § 1437; and any
16 requirement associated with such public assistance, rental assistance, or housing subsidy program.

17 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- RHODE ISLAND VETERANS'
HOME

1 This act would add “space force” to the branches of the military included in various
2 sections of general law regarding the veterans home, veterans cemetery and the power of armed
3 forces officers to take acknowledgements.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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