



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

Raised Bill No. 5416

LCO No. 2296



Referred to Committee on VETERANS' AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Introduced by:
(VA)

AN ACT CONCERNING FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-105a of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall seek a waiver from
4 federal law to allow persons who live in an area in which (1) the
5 unemployment rate is greater than ten per cent, or (2) there is an
6 insufficient number of jobs to provide such persons with employment,
7 to be exempt from the three-month participation limit of the
8 supplemental nutrition assistance program implemented pursuant to
9 the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

10 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement vehicle
11 evaluation provisions in accordance with 7 CFR 273.8(f)(4).

12 (c) The Commissioner of Social Services, pursuant to 7 USC
13 2014(e)(6), shall implement the federal option to mandate the use of a
14 standard utility allowance, to be used in place of actual utility costs, for

15 purposes of calculating the excess shelter deduction of applicants for, or
16 recipients of, supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits.
17 Pursuant to 7 USC 2014(e)(6)(C)(iii)(III), the commissioner shall not
18 prorate a standard utility allowance based upon the fact that an assisted
19 household shares the utility with an individual who is not a member of
20 the assisted household.

21 (d) Not later than December 31, 2024, the Commissioner of Social
22 Services shall enter into a contract with an outside vendor to update the
23 system utilized by the Department of Social Services to administer the
24 supplemental nutrition assistance program for the purpose of enabling
25 the department to stagger the distribution of program benefits so that
26 benefits are distributed, in accordance with federal law, to cohorts of
27 program beneficiaries designated by the commissioner at multiple
28 intervals during each month. Not later than March 1, 2026, the
29 commissioner shall commence staggering the distribution of such
30 benefits to such cohorts of beneficiaries each month, in accordance with
31 federal law. Not later than April 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
32 commissioner shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section
33 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
34 cognizance of matters relating to human services regarding the
35 staggering of distribution benefits pursuant to this subsection.

36 (e) The Commissioner of Social Services shall, within available
37 appropriations, provide to veterans the same level of supplemental
38 nutrition assistance program benefits as such veterans would have
39 received under such program without a work requirement, before such
40 a work requirement exemption for veterans was eliminated in the Food
41 and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended by P.L. 119-21.

42 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) There is established the
43 Connecticut Farmers' Market/Veteran Nutrition Program which shall
44 be provided for from funds available to the Commissioner of
45 Agriculture and from other sources as such funds may become
46 available. The program shall supply Connecticut-grown fresh produce

47 to veteran participants through the distribution of vouchers that are
48 redeemable only at designated Connecticut farmers' markets. For
49 purposes of this section, "veteran participant" means a veteran, as
50 defined in section 27-103 of the general statutes, who is sixty years of
51 age or older and (1) is currently residing in elderly housing, (2) is a
52 participant of a registered congregate meal site, or (3) has been
53 identified by a municipal veterans committee, director or
54 representative, as described in section 27-135 of the general statutes, as
55 being at nutritional risk. The program is designed to provide both a
56 supplemental source of fresh produce for the dietary needs of veterans
57 who are judged to be at nutritional risk and to stimulate an increased
58 demand for Connecticut-grown produce at Connecticut farmers'
59 markets. For purposes of this section, "fresh produce" means fruits and
60 vegetables that have not been processed in any manner and chicken
61 eggs.

62 (b) The program shall be administered by the Commissioner of
63 Agriculture who shall maintain all conditions for its operations.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	17b-105a
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) provide to veterans the same level of benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program that they would have received under such program without a work requirement, prior to the elimination of the veterans work requirement exemption under Public Law 119-21, and (2) establish a Connecticut Farmers' Market/Veteran Nutrition Program to assist veterans deemed to be at nutritional risk.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]