General Assembly

Raised Bill No. 282

February Session, 2026

LCO No. **1624**

Referred to Committee on VETERANS' AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Introduced by:
(VA)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VETERANS' GRAVES UPKEEP WORKING GROUP.

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

Section 1. Section 27-123 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

(a) **[**In each city and town there shall be appointed annually, by**]** Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the chief executive authority of **[**the**]** each city or town **[**,**]** shall appoint a committee of three citizens of the city or town, who are veterans and whose duty it shall be to see that the grave of any person who served in time of war in the military or naval forces of the English colonies in America, prior to 1776, or of the state of Connecticut or in the armed forces of the United States, **[**shall be suitably kept and cared for**]** are suitably cared for and maintained. Not later than January 15, 2027, and annually thereafter, the chief executive authority of each city or town shall submit to the Commissioner of Consumer Protection the names of the three citizens so appointed and the address of the electronic mail account created

under subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of this section.

(b) If the cost of [such care and maintenance] caring for and maintaining any grave described in subsection (a) of this section is not paid by private persons or by the trustees of the cemetery where any such grave is situated, [it] such cost shall be paid by the city or town; and cities and towns are authorized to appropriate money for such purpose and to apply for any grant money available under section 2 of this act for such purpose. Money so appropriated, or grant money received under section 2 of this act, may be expended directly by the city or town or may be paid to the trustees or manager of the cemetery in which any such grave is [located] situated; but the sum paid in any year shall not exceed for any such grave the sum usually charged for the annual care and maintenance of a grave in the same cemetery or, if no such charge is made in that cemetery, it shall not exceed the sum charged in other cemeteries in the same city or town for such service, provided, when any such grave has settled appreciably, such sum may be exceeded.

(c) (1) Not later than January 1, 2027, each city or town shall create an electronic mail account for the receipt of complaints regarding the care and maintenance of any grave described in subsection (a) of this section situated in a cemetery that is owned and operated by such city or town. The committee appointed pursuant to said subsection shall regularly monitor such electronic mail account and coordinate with city or town employees in attempting to resolve any such complaint, where practicable. Each city or town shall conspicuously post on the Internet web site of such city or town the address of the electronic mail account created under this subdivision.

(2) Not later than January 1, 2027, the Department of Consumer Protection shall create an electronic mail account for the receipt of complaints regarding the care and maintenance of any grave described in subsection (a) of this section situated in a cemetery that is not owned and operated by a city or town, including, but not limited to, any

47 cemetery owned and operated privately or by a cemetery association,
48 ecclesiastical society or similar nonprofit organization. The
49 Commissioner of Consumer Protection shall designate department staff
50 who shall regularly monitor such electronic mail account and
51 coordinate with the owners and operators of cemeteries described in
52 this subdivision in attempting to resolve any such complaint, where
53 practicable. The department shall conspicuously post on the Internet
54 web site of the department (A) the address of the electronic mail account
55 created under this subdivision, and (B) the address of the electronic mail
56 account created by each city or town under subdivision (1) of this
57 subsection.

58 (d) Not later than November 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
59 Commissioner of Consumer Protection shall notify the chief executive
60 authority of each city or town of the requirements under this section.
61 Not later than November 15, 2026, and annually thereafter, the chief
62 executive authority of each city or town shall notify the owners and
63 operators of any cemetery located in such city or town of the
64 requirements under this section.

65 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2026*) (a) For the fiscal year ending
66 June 30, 2028, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department of
67 Consumer Protection shall, within available appropriations, administer
68 a program to provide grants to municipalities for the care and
69 maintenance of any grave described in subsection (a) of section 27-123
70 of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

71 (b) Not later than January 1, 2027, the department shall develop
72 eligibility criteria to be used in selecting among applicant municipalities
73 for such grants, develop application forms and deadlines and post in a
74 conspicuous location on the department's Internet web site a description
75 of the grant program that includes, but is not limited to, such criteria,
76 forms and deadlines.

77 (c) Not later than January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the

department shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to veterans' and military affairs. Such report shall include information for the preceding calendar year on the number of applications for grants that were received, the number of grants that were awarded and a list of the municipalities that received grants.

Sec. 3. Section 19a-296 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

(a) Cemetery associations shall be organized in accordance with the provisions of sections 33-1025 to 33-1047, inclusive, and shall not be conducted for the purposes of speculation in cemetery lots and property, or for private gain, either directly or indirectly, to any of the members of any such association; and land for the enlargement of a cemetery may be taken in accordance with the provisions of section 48-18.

(b) (1) The board of directors or board of trustees of any cemetery association shall hold an annual meeting of the association. At such annual meeting, the board shall accept an annual financial statement that shall contain an accounting of income and expenses of the cemetery association for the preceding fiscal year and an accounting of assets owned by the association. Such financial statement shall be included in the minutes of the annual meeting at which such financial statement was accepted. Not later than thirty days after each annual meeting, the board shall file a copy of the minutes of the annual meeting, including any financial statement required to be included in such minutes, with the committee appointed pursuant to subsection (a) of section 27-123, as amended by this act, for the city or town in which the cemetery owned or controlled by such cemetery association is located. The board shall retain the minutes of such annual meeting for a period of not less than twenty years after such meeting. Whenever such minutes are filed with such committee, such committee shall retain such minutes for a period

110 of not less than twenty years after such filing and shall make such
111 minutes available for public inspection at the office of such committee.

112 (c) No officer, director or trustee of a cemetery association may serve
113 as an officer, director or trustee of any company that manages or
114 operates any aspect of the cemetery.

115 (d) **[**Any**]** In cases where a cemetery association fails to file a copy of
116 the minutes of an annual meeting, including any financial statement
117 required to be included in such minutes, with the committee appointed
118 pursuant to subsection (a) of section 27-123, as amended by this act, for
119 the city or town in which the cemetery owned or controlled by such
120 cemetery association is located, any interested party may petition the
121 probate court for the district within which **[**the**]** such cemetery **[**owned
122 or controlled by a cemetery association**]** is located to require disclosure
123 of **[**the minutes of an annual meeting of the cemetery association
124 including any financial statement required to be included in**]** such
125 minutes. The court may, after hearing, with notice to all interested
126 parties, grant the petition and require disclosure of such minutes for
127 such periods of time as it determines are reasonable and necessary on
128 finding that: (1) The petitioner has an interest in the minutes sufficient
129 to warrant disclosure, and (2) the petition is not for the purpose of
130 harassment.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*October 1, 2026*	27-123
Sec. 2	*October 1, 2026*	New section
Sec. 3	*October 1, 2026*	19a-296

Statement of Purpose:

To implement the recommendations of the working group established pursuant to special act 23-25 for the upkeep of veterans' graves.

[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.]