GOV. MALLOY SIGNS NEW LAWS EXPANDING BENEFITS FOR VETERANS AS RESIDENTS PREPARE TO COMMEMORATE MEMORIAL DAY

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy on Friday afternoon signed into law a series of bills expanding benefits and services for U.S. military veterans, noting the particular significance of the approaching Memorial Day holiday as residents prepare to honor the service of the men and women of the military.

“This Memorial Day, we honor the men and women who we’ve lost while fighting to make our nation a better, stronger place. As we honor those we have lost, I’m pleased to be signing into law a number of bills that honor and assist those who have served,” said Governor Malloy. “These men and women have provided an incredible service for our state, and we must show them how much we appreciate their service. I would like to thank the state officials and commissioners who serve in my Veterans Cabinet for partnering with lawmakers in the General Assembly to work on new laws that will aid our nation’s veterans.”

The bills Governor Malloy signed on Friday are:

- **Public Act 13-49, An Act Concerning Military Leave from Employment**
  - This bill protects employees who serve or served in the military from workplace discrimination due to their service. Specifically, it extends the employment protections currently afforded to employees who are U.S. armed forces reservists or National Guard members to members of the state armed forces who take time from their employment to perform ordered military duty.

- **Public Act 13-34, An Act Requiring Cities and Towns to Designate a Veterans’ Service Contact Person**
  - This bill requires cities and towns in the State of Connecticut to appoint a town employee to serve as a veterans’ service contact, who will act as an ombudsman that could guide veterans to the appropriate local, state or
federal resources. Municipalities that currently have a full-time veterans’ representative or provide funding to have access to one would be exempt.

- **Public Act 13-44, An Act Concerning the Display of the State or National Flag at Half-Staff and the Placement of Flags on Cemetery Graves Prior to Memorial Day**
  - In addition to clarifying protocols for when the governor can order flags to be flown at half-staff, this bill protects the placement of flags at the gravesites of war veterans around Memorial Day. Prior to the signing of this bill, state law prohibited any town, cemetery association or ecclesiastical society from restricting the placement of the U.S. flag on veterans’ graves beginning the Saturday before Memorial Day until the Monday after the Fourth of July. Under this new bill, those prohibitions will begin starting on the Wednesday prior to Memorial Day, allowing for some additional time in preparation for the national holiday.

  - This bill restores state benefits for military veterans who were previously denied federal benefits based solely on his or her sexual orientation pursuant to a federal policy prohibiting homosexuals from serving in the armed forces, which has since been repealed.

- **Special Act 13-5, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study the Use of Military Occupational Specialty Training as a Substitute for State Licensing Requirements**
  - With the goal of aiding veterans in securing employment, this bill establishes a task force that will be responsible for reviewing military occupational specialty training experience and determine if any such training is equivalent to that required for state licensing purposes.

  “About 7,000 veterans will return to Connecticut over the next two years and I strongly believe the state must do everything in its power to help them transition back to civilian life,” said Lt. Governor Wyman. “Deployment for these brave men and women means many months away from their homes, their families and their jobs. These new laws are a way to honor that sacrifice by supporting them and their families when they return home.”

  “We want our men and women who wear the uniform and protect our country to know that when they come home, there is appreciation and assistance available to them,” said State Senator Carlo Leone (D-Stamford), who serves as co-chairman of the General Assembly’s Veterans’ Affairs Committee. “These new bills signed and supported by Governor Malloy indicate our unwavering support for our veterans as we take time to reflect on their service this Memorial Day weekend.”
State Representative Jack Hennessey (D-Bridgeport) stated, “As co-chairman of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee and a former Army Ranger, I know that my ability to serve in the legislature and to pass benefits for veterans is directly tied to the past sacrifices of those brave men and women who died protecting our democracy.”

This weekend, Governor Malloy will commemorate Memorial Day by attending ceremonies in Enfield, Danbury, Newington and Wethersfield. In addition to issuing an official proclamation, the Governor has ordered flags to fly at half-staff on Monday, May 27, 2013 from sunrise until sunset, in accordance with the U.S. flag code.

Veterans residing in Connecticut and their families can visit veterans.ct.gov for information on a wide variety of services and benefits offered by the State of Connecticut and federal government agencies.

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