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Additional Legislation Taking Effect This Month



Capitol Commentary *By State Rep. Mary Ann Carson*

My last column detailed new laws that took effect on July 1. There are several additional laws taking effect this month and the following are details, with information courtesy of the non-partisan Office of Legislative Research (OLR).

Public Act 08-67 allows grandparents or other relative caregivers appointed guardian of a child through the Superior Court and who are not receiving subsidized guardianship or foster care payments from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), to apply for grants under the probate-court administered Kinship Fund and Grandparents and Relatives Respite funds. Under prior law, only grandparents or relative caregivers appointed guardian of a child through probate court could get these grants, which are subject to available appropriations.

Public Act 08-50 makes a number of revisions to statutes administered by the State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). These changes include requirements that: require anyone applying for a Connecticut driver's license who has not previously been licensed in Connecticut or elsewhere to take an eight-hour course on safe driving practices as a prerequisite to licensure; allow DMV to extend the expiration dates of licenses, registrations, and other credentials under certain emergency or other circumstances; create a new special "Support Our Troops!" license plate and another to provide funding for nursing education and training programs.

Public Act 08-155 establishes a program to be administered by the Department of Transportation (DOT), called the "Buses for 21st Century Mobility" program. The purpose of the program is to provide new and expanded bus transportation services. DOT must now begin accepting applications from publicly funded transportation providers and nonprofit community transportation service providers.

The act also makes up to \$5 million in bonding previously authorized by law for implementing transportation strategy projects and initiatives available for purchasing vehicles for the Buses for 21st Century Mobility program.

Public Act 08-87 modifies the eligibility criteria for admission to the Veterans' Home in two ways. It adds certain federal criteria to the standards veterans must meet to be eligible for admission and extends eligibility for admission to certain current and former service members based on their entitlement to federal military retirement pay. It also extends eligibility for burial in the state veterans' cemeteries to these service members.

The law also expands the program that requires the Connecticut National Guard and state Veterans' Affairs Department to award service medals and ribbons to qualified wartime veterans by allowing the officials to make the awards posthumously.

Public Act 08-40 makes permanent a military spouse's eligibility for unemployment compensation if he or she voluntarily leaves a job to accompany a spouse required to relocate for active-duty service in the U. S. Armed Forces. Prior law applied to spouses who left their jobs between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Under existing law, an employer's unemployment taxes are not directly affected by an employee who files claims under the act.

Editors Note: State Representative Mary Ann Carson represents Kent, New Fairfield, New Milford and Sherman in the Connecticut General Assembly.