

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: Yes

VETO MESSAGE: No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING: Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

To check for circulating copies, contact New Jersey State Government Publications at the State Library (609) 278-2640 ext.103 or <mailto:refdesk@njstatelib.org>

REPORTS: No

HEARINGS: Yes

Committee meeting of Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee : the Committee will receive testimony from invited guests to discuss issues concerning veterans with catastrophic injuries and disabilities

[February 16, 2022]

Library call number: 974.90 S684, 2022a

Available online at <https://dspace.njstatelib.org/handle/10929/79371>

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: Yes

Matthew Fazelpoor, 'Bipartisan bill to increase payments to disabled vets signed into law', NJBIZ (online), 16 Sep2022

ERIC CONKLIN; Staff Writer, 'Murphy signs bill to raise veteran benefit payments Murphy signs bill to raise veteran benefit payments New law ends 40-year drought of increases', Press of Atlantic City, The (online), 16 Sep 2022 3A

end

P.L. 2022, CHAPTER 105, *approved September 15, 2022*
Assembly, No. 1477

1 AN ACT providing for an increase to the allowance paid to veterans
2 with certain wartime service-connected disabilities, and
3 amending various parts of the statutory law.
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. R.S.38:18-2 is amended to read as follows:

9 38:18-2. A soldier, who has sustained a total loss of sight as a
10 result of his service during any of the wars mentioned in **[section 1**
11 **of this chapter]** R.S.38:18-1, shall be paid for the term of his life,
12 and upon his death his surviving spouse shall be paid, provided that
13 the soldier or surviving spouse shall continue as a resident of this
14 State, the sum of **[\$750.00]** \$1,800 annually, in monthly payments.
15 Such payments shall be due and payable from the date of discharge
16 or release of the soldier if application therefor shall be made within
17 one year from the date of such discharge or release. If the
18 application shall be made one year from the date of discharge or
19 release of the soldier such payments shall be due and payable from
20 the date of such application. Accrued payments to the date of
21 certification shall be paid in one lump sum.

22 (cf: P.L.1985, c.116, s.1)
23

24 2. R.S.38:18-3 is amended to read as follows:

25 38:18-3. Evidence of the service and disability mentioned in
26 **[this chapter]** R.S.38:18-1 shall be furnished to the Division of
27 Veterans Services of the Department of **[Economic Development]**
28 Military and Veterans Affairs, which shall examine the same and
29 upon being satisfied that the service was performed and the soldier
30 has been rendered totally blind as a result thereof, shall so certify to
31 the **[State Comptroller]** Director of the Division of Budget and
32 Accounting who shall, upon receipt thereof, draw **[his]** a warrant
33 on the State Treasurer in favor of the applicant in a bulk sum for
34 any accrued payments and in the sum of **[\$750.00]** \$1,800
35 annually, which the State Treasurer shall pay out of the money
36 appropriated therefor by the Legislature.

37 (cf: P.L.1971, c.329, s.2)
38

39 3. Section 2 of P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-2) is amended to
40 read as follows:

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 2. A veteran who served in the active military or naval forces
2 of the United States and who has paraplegia and permanent
3 paralysis of both legs and lower parts of the body, or who has
4 osteochondritis and permanent loss of the use of both legs, or who
5 has hemiplegia and permanent paralysis of one leg and one arm or
6 either side of the body, resulting from injury to the spinal cord,
7 skeletal structure, or brain, or who has had both hands, both feet, or
8 one hand and one foot amputated, or who has lost the use of both
9 feet or both legs, due to multiple sclerosis, sustained through enemy
10 action, or accident, or resulting from disease contracted while in
11 active military or naval service, shall be paid for the term of the
12 veteran's life, and upon the veteran's death the surviving spouse,
13 domestic partner, or partner in civil union shall be paid, the sum of
14 **[\$750]** \$1,800 annually in monthly payments. Such payments shall
15 be due and payable from the date of discharge or release of the
16 veteran if application therefor shall be made within one year from
17 the date of such discharge or release. If the application shall be
18 made after one year from the date of discharge or release of the
19 veteran, such payment shall be due and payable from the date of
20 such application. Accrued payments to the date of certification shall
21 be paid in one lump sum.

22 Nothing in P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-1 et seq.) shall be
23 intended to include paraplegia or hemiplegia resulting from
24 locomotor ataxia or other forms of syphilis of the central nervous
25 system or from chronic alcohol use disorder, or to include other
26 forms of disease resulting from the veteran's own misconduct which
27 may produce signs and symptoms similar to those resulting from
28 paraplegia, osteochondritis, hemiplegia, or multiple sclerosis.
29 (cf: P.L.2017, c.131, s.146)

30
31 4. Section 3 of P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-3) is amended to
32 read as follows:

33 3. Evidence of the service and disability mentioned in this act,
34 P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-1 et seq.), shall be furnished to the
35 Division of **[Veterans']** Veterans Services of the Department of
36 **[Human Services]** Military and Veterans Affairs, which shall
37 examine the same and upon being satisfied that the service was
38 performed and the veteran has been rendered permanently paralyzed
39 or has permanently lost the use of both legs, or has suffered
40 amputation, as defined in section 2 of this act, shall so certify to the
41 Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the
42 Department of the Treasury, who shall, upon receipt thereof, draw
43 **[his]** a warrant on the State Treasurer in favor of the applicant in
44 the sum of **[\$750.00]** \$1,800 annually, which the State Treasurer
45 shall pay out of the money appropriated therefor by the Legislature.
46 (cf: P.L.1981, c.424, s.3).

1 5. This act shall take effect on January 1 next following the
2 date of enactment.

3

4

5

6

7 Increases allowance paid to war veterans with certain service-
8 connected disabilities.

ASSEMBLY, No. 1477

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman **DANIEL R. BENSON**

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Assemblyman **ANTHONY S. VERRELLI**

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywomen **Speight, Reynolds-Jackson, Murphy, Gove, Quijano,**

Assemblymen **Karabinchak, Rooney, Moen, Space, Wirths,**

Assemblywoman **McKnight, Assemblyman Freiman, Assemblywoman**

Lopez, Assemblymen Stanley, Conaway, Assemblywoman Swain,

Assemblyman Tully, Assemblywomen Mosquera, Tucker, Assemblyman

Mejia, Assemblywomen Lampitt, Jimenez, Assemblymen Danielsen and

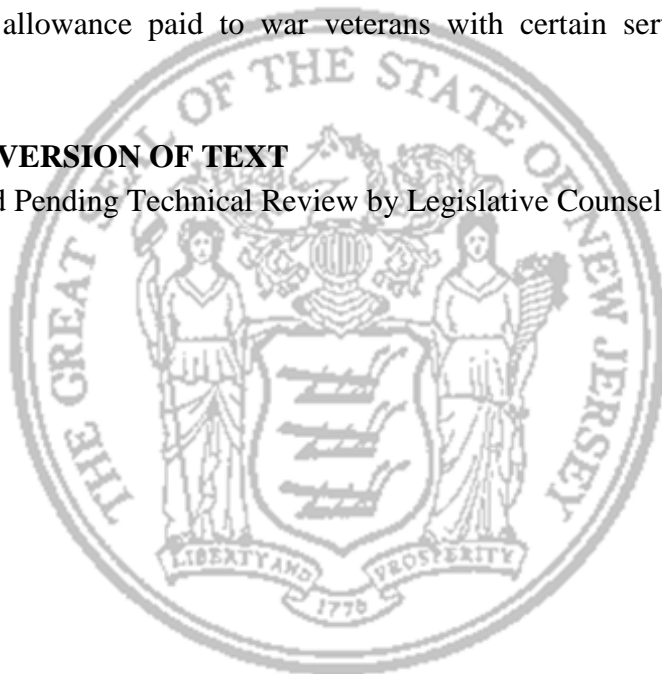
Mukherji

SYNOPSIS

Increases allowance paid to war veterans with certain service-connected disabilities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/7/2022)

1 AN ACT providing for an increase to the allowance paid to veterans
2 with certain wartime service-connected disabilities, and
3 amending various parts of the statutory law.
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. R.S.38:18-2 is amended to read as follows:

9 38:18-2. A soldier, who has sustained a total loss of sight as a
10 result of his service during any of the wars mentioned in [section 1
11 of this chapter] R.S.38:18-1, shall be paid for the term of his life,
12 and upon his death his surviving spouse shall be paid, provided that
13 the soldier or surviving spouse shall continue as a resident of this
14 State, the sum of ~~[\$750.00]~~ \$1,800 annually, in monthly payments.
15 Such payments shall be due and payable from the date of discharge
16 or release of the soldier if application therefor shall be made within
17 one year from the date of such discharge or release. If the
18 application shall be made one year from the date of discharge or
19 release of the soldier such payments shall be due and payable from
20 the date of such application. Accrued payments to the date of
21 certification shall be paid in one lump sum.

22 (cf: P.L.1985, c.116, s.1)
23

24 2. R.S.38:18-3 is amended to read as follows:

25 38:18-3. Evidence of the service and disability mentioned in
26 [this chapter] R.S.38:18-1 shall be furnished to the Division of
27 Veterans Services of the Department of ~~[Economic Development]~~
28 Military and Veterans Affairs, which shall examine the same and
29 upon being satisfied that the service was performed and the soldier
30 has been rendered totally blind as a result thereof, shall so certify to
31 the ~~[State Comptroller]~~ Director of the Division of Budget and
32 Accounting who shall, upon receipt thereof, draw ~~[his]~~ a warrant
33 on the State Treasurer in favor of the applicant in a bulk sum for
34 any accrued payments and in the sum of ~~[\$750.00]~~ \$1,800
35 annually, which the State Treasurer shall pay out of the money
36 appropriated therefor by the Legislature.

37 (cf: P.L.1971, c.329, s.2)
38

39 3. Section 2 of P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-2) is amended to
40 read as follows:

41 2. A veteran who served in the active military or naval forces
42 of the United States and who has paraplegia and permanent
43 paralysis of both legs and lower parts of the body, or who has
44 osteochondritis and permanent loss of the use of both legs, or who

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 has hemiplegia and permanent paralysis of one leg and one arm or
2 either side of the body, resulting from injury to the spinal cord,
3 skeletal structure, or brain, or who has had both hands, both feet, or
4 one hand and one foot amputated, or who has lost the use of both
5 feet or both legs, due to multiple sclerosis, sustained through enemy
6 action, or accident, or resulting from disease contracted while in
7 active military or naval service, shall be paid for the term of the
8 veteran's life, and upon the veteran's death the surviving spouse,
9 domestic partner, or partner in civil union shall be paid, the sum of
10 **[\$750]** \$1,800 annually in monthly payments. Such payments shall
11 be due and payable from the date of discharge or release of the
12 veteran if application therefor shall be made within one year from
13 the date of such discharge or release. If the application shall be
14 made after one year from the date of discharge or release of the
15 veteran, such payment shall be due and payable from the date of
16 such application. Accrued payments to the date of certification shall
17 be paid in one lump sum.

18 Nothing in P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-1 et seq.) shall be
19 intended to include paraplegia or hemiplegia resulting from
20 locomotor ataxia or other forms of syphilis of the central nervous
21 system or from chronic alcohol use disorder, or to include other
22 forms of disease resulting from the veteran's own misconduct which
23 may produce signs and symptoms similar to those resulting from
24 paraplegia, osteochondritis, hemiplegia, or multiple sclerosis.
25 (cf: P.L.2017, c.131, s.146)

26

27 4. Section 3 of P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-3) is amended to
28 read as follows:

29 3. Evidence of the service and disability mentioned in this act,
30 P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-1 et seq.), shall be furnished to the
31 Division of **[Veterans']** Veterans Services of the Department of
32 **[Human Services]** Military and Veterans Affairs, which shall
33 examine the same and upon being satisfied that the service was
34 performed and the veteran has been rendered permanently paralyzed
35 or has permanently lost the use of both legs, or has suffered
36 amputation, as defined in section 2 of this act, shall so certify to the
37 Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the
38 Department of the Treasury, who shall, upon receipt thereof, draw
39 **[his]** a warrant on the State Treasurer in favor of the applicant in
40 the sum of **[\$750.00]** \$1,800 annually, which the State Treasurer
41 shall pay out of the money appropriated therefor by the Legislature.
42 (cf: P.L.1981, c.424, s.3).

43

44 5. This act shall take effect on January 1 next following the
45 date of enactment.

1 STATEMENT

2

3 This bill would increase the annual payments that are made by
4 the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected
5 disabilities to \$1,800.

6 Currently, a blind veteran receives \$750 annually under the Blind
7 Veterans' Allowance Program. This amount has not been changed
8 since 1971. A veteran with certain other disabilities also receives
9 \$750 annually under the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans'
10 Allowance Program. This amount has not been changed since 1981.
11 This bill would increase the annual payments to \$1,800.

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1477

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 7, 2022

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1477.

This bill would increase the annual payments that are made by the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to \$1,800.

Currently, a blind veteran receives \$750 annually under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program. This amount has not been changed since 1971. A veteran with certain other disabilities also receives \$750 annually under the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program. This amount has not been changed since 1981. This bill would increase the annual payments to \$1,800.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2022-2023 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
ASSEMBLY, No. 1477
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: FEBRUARY 16, 2022

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Increases allowance paid to war veterans with certain service-connected disabilities.
- Type of Impact:** Annual expenditure increase to the State General Fund.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>FY 2023</u>	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>
State Cost	\$97,125	\$194,250	\$194,250

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the incremental State cost to provide the higher annual allowance to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to be \$194,250 per year. Costs would be higher or lower each year depending upon the number of veterans who are eligible to receive the allowance.
- As of March 2021, there were 185 blind and otherwise disabled veterans receiving an allowance under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program and the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program. Veterans may be eligible for both allowance payments.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill would increase the annual payments that are made by the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to \$1,800.

Currently, a blind veteran receives \$750 annually under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program. A veteran with certain other disabilities also receives \$750 annually under the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes that the incremental State cost to provide the higher annual allowance to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to be \$194,250 per year. This bill would increase the annual payments by the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to \$1,800 from \$750 currently.

As of March 2021, there were 185 blind and otherwise disabled veterans receiving an allowance under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program and the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program. Veterans may be eligible for both allowance payments.

The total cost to provide 185 annual allowances at the \$1,800 level to eligible blind and disabled veterans is \$333,000. The increase in the allowance as provided for in this bill is \$1,050 (\$1,800 - \$750) per eligible veteran. Thus, this bill would increase the State's cost to provide an annual allowance to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities by \$194,250.

Costs would be higher or lower each year depending upon the number of veterans who are eligible to receive the allowance.

Section: State Government
Analyst: Tracey Pino
Principal Counsel
Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1477

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 14, 2022

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1447.

This bill would increase the annual payments that are made by the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to \$1,800.

Currently, a blind veteran receives \$750 annually under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program. This amount has not been changed since 1971. A veteran with certain other disabilities also receives \$750 annually under the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program. This amount has not been changed since 1981. This bill would increase the annual payments to \$1,800.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the incremental State costs to provide the higher annual allowance to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to be \$194,250 per year. Costs would be higher or lower each year depending upon the number of veterans who are eligible to receive the allowance.

As of March 2021, there were 185 blind and otherwise disabled veterans receiving an allowance under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program and the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program. Veterans may be eligible for both allowance payments.

SENATE, No. 1536

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 10, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Senator MICHAEL L. TESTA, JR.

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Stanfield, Madden, O'Scanlon, Holzapfel, Cruz-Perez and Singleton

SYNOPSIS

Increases allowance paid to war veterans with certain service-connected disabilities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/16/2022)

S1536 GREENSTEIN, TESTA

2

1 AN ACT providing for an increase to the allowance paid to veterans
2 with certain wartime service-connected disabilities, and
3 amending various parts of the statutory law.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. R.S.38:18-2 is amended to read as follows:

9 38:18-2. A soldier, who has sustained a total loss of sight as a
10 result of his service during any of the wars mentioned in **[section 1**
11 **of this chapter]** R.S.38:18-1, shall be paid for the term of his life,
12 and upon his death his surviving spouse shall be paid, provided that
13 the soldier or surviving spouse shall continue as a resident of this
14 State, the sum of **[\$750.00]** \$1,800 annually, in monthly payments.
15 Such payments shall be due and payable from the date of discharge
16 or release of the soldier if application therefor shall be made within
17 one year from the date of such discharge or release. If the
18 application shall be made one year from the date of discharge or
19 release of the soldier such payments shall be due and payable from
20 the date of such application. Accrued payments to the date of
21 certification shall be paid in one lump sum.
22 (cf: P.L.1985, c.116, s.1)

23
24 2. R.S.38:18-3 is amended to read as follows:

25 38:18-3. Evidence of the service and disability mentioned in
26 **[this chapter]** R.S.38:18-1 shall be furnished to the Division of
27 Veterans Services of the Department of **[Economic Development]**
28 Military and Veterans Affairs, which shall examine the same and
29 upon being satisfied that the service was performed and the soldier
30 has been rendered totally blind as a result thereof, shall so certify to
31 the **[State Comptroller]** Director of the Division of Budget and
32 Accounting who shall, upon receipt thereof, draw **[his]** a warrant
33 on the State Treasurer in favor of the applicant in a bulk sum for
34 any accrued payments and in the sum of **[\$750.00]** \$1,800
35 annually, which the State Treasurer shall pay out of the money
36 appropriated therefor by the Legislature.
37 (cf: P.L.1971, c.329, s.2)

38
39 3. Section 2 of P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-2) is amended to
40 read as follows:

41 2. A veteran who served in the active military or naval forces
42 of the United States and who has paraplegia and permanent
43 paralysis of both legs and lower parts of the body, or who has
44 osteochondritis and permanent loss of the use of both legs, or who
45 has hemiplegia and permanent paralysis of one leg and one arm or

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 either side of the body, resulting from injury to the spinal cord,
2 skeletal structure, or brain, or who has had both hands, both feet, or
3 one hand and one foot amputated, or who has lost the use of both
4 feet or both legs, due to multiple sclerosis, sustained through enemy
5 action, or accident, or resulting from disease contracted while in
6 active military or naval service, shall be paid for the term of the
7 veteran's life, and upon the veteran's death the surviving spouse,
8 domestic partner, or partner in civil union shall be paid, the sum of
9 **[\$750]** \$1,800 annually in monthly payments. Such payments shall
10 be due and payable from the date of discharge or release of the
11 veteran if application therefor shall be made within one year from
12 the date of such discharge or release. If the application shall be
13 made after one year from the date of discharge or release of the
14 veteran, such payment shall be due and payable from the date of
15 such application. Accrued payments to the date of certification shall
16 be paid in one lump sum.

17 Nothing in P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-1 et seq.) shall be
18 intended to include paraplegia or hemiplegia resulting from
19 locomotor ataxia or other forms of syphilis of the central nervous
20 system or from chronic alcohol use disorder, or to include other
21 forms of disease resulting from the veteran's own misconduct which
22 may produce signs and symptoms similar to those resulting from
23 paraplegia, osteochondritis, hemiplegia, or multiple sclerosis.

24 (cf: P.L.2017, c.131, s.146)

25

26 4. Section 3 of P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-3) is amended to
27 read as follows:

28 3. Evidence of the service and disability mentioned in this act,
29 P.L.1947, c.263 (C.38:18A-1 et seq.), shall be furnished to the
30 Division of **[Veterans']** Veterans Services of the Department of
31 **[Human Services]** Military and Veterans Affairs, which shall
32 examine the same and upon being satisfied that the service was
33 performed and the veteran has been rendered permanently paralyzed
34 or has permanently lost the use of both legs, or has suffered
35 amputation, as defined in section 2 of this act, shall so certify to the
36 Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the
37 Department of the Treasury, who shall, upon receipt thereof, draw
38 **[his]** a warrant on the State Treasurer in favor of the applicant in
39 the sum of **[\$750.00]** \$1,800 annually, which the State Treasurer
40 shall pay out of the money appropriated therefor by the Legislature.

41 (cf: P.L.1981, c.424, s.3)

42

43 5. This act shall take effect on January 1 next following the
44 date of enactment.

STATEMENT

1

2

3 This bill would increase the annual payments by the State to
4 veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities from
5 \$750 to \$1,800.

6 The amount is paid to a veteran who has sustained a total loss of
7 sight, or who has paraplegia and permanent paralysis of both legs
8 and lower parts of the body, or who has osteochondritis and
9 permanent loss of the use of both legs, or who has hemiplegia and
10 permanent paralysis of one leg and one arm or either side of the
11 body, resulting from injury to the spinal cord, skeletal structure, or
12 brain, or who has had hands or feet amputated, or who has lost the
13 use of both feet or both legs, due to multiple sclerosis, sustained
14 through enemy action, or accident, or resulting from disease
15 contracted while in active military service.

16 The amounts have not been changed since 1981. There are
17 approximately 185 persons receiving the benefit.

SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1536

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 19, 2022

The Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1536.

This bill would increase the annual payments by the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities from \$750 to \$1,800.

The amount is paid to a veteran who has sustained a total loss of sight, or who has paraplegia and permanent paralysis of both legs and lower parts of the body, or who has osteochondritis and permanent loss of the use of both legs, or who has hemiplegia and permanent paralysis of one leg and one arm or either side of the body, resulting from injury to the spinal cord, skeletal structure, or brain, or who has had hands or feet amputated, or who has lost the use of both feet or both legs, due to multiple sclerosis, sustained through enemy action, or accident, or resulting from disease contracted while in active military service.

The amounts have not been changed since 1981. There are approximately 185 persons receiving the benefit.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
SENATE, No. 1536
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: MAY 26, 2022

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Increases allowance paid to war veterans with certain service-connected disabilities.

Type of Impact: Annual expenditure increase to the State General Fund.

Agencies Affected: Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>FY 2023</u>	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>
State Cost Increase	\$97,125	\$194,250	\$194,250

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the incremental State cost to provide the higher annual allowance to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to be \$194,250 per year. Costs would be higher or lower each year depending upon the number of veterans who are eligible to receive the allowance.
- As of March 2021, there were 185 blind and otherwise disabled veterans receiving an allowance under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program and the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program. Veterans may be eligible for both allowance payments.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill would increase the annual payments that are made by the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to \$1,800.

Currently, a blind veteran receives \$750 annually under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program. A veteran with certain other disabilities also receives \$750 annually under the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes that the incremental State cost to provide the higher annual allowance to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to be \$194,250 per year. This bill would increase the annual payments by the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to \$1,800 from \$750 currently.

As of March 2021, there were 185 blind and otherwise disabled veterans receiving an allowance under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program and the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program. Veterans may be eligible for both allowance payments.

The total cost to provide 185 annual allowances at the \$1,800 level to eligible blind and disabled veterans is \$333,000. The increase in the allowance as provided for in this bill is \$1,050 (\$1,800 - \$750) per eligible veteran. Thus, this bill would increase the State's cost to provide an annual allowance to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities by \$194,250.

Costs would be higher or lower each year depending upon the number of veterans who are eligible to receive the allowance.

Section: State Government

*Analyst: Jessica Oestreicher
Deputy Counsel*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1536

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 6, 2022

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1536.

This bill would increase the annual payments by the State to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities from \$750 to \$1,800.

The amount is paid to a veteran who has sustained a total loss of sight, or who has paraplegia and permanent paralysis of both legs and lower parts of the body, or who has osteochondritis and permanent loss of the use of both legs, or who has hemiplegia and permanent paralysis of one leg and one arm or either side of the body, resulting from injury to the spinal cord, skeletal structure, or brain, or who has had hands or feet amputated, or who has lost the use of both feet or both legs, due to multiple sclerosis, sustained through enemy action, or accident, or resulting from disease contracted while in active military service.

The amounts have not been changed since 1981. There are approximately 185 persons receiving the benefit.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services concludes that the incremental State cost to provide the higher annual allowance to veterans with certain wartime service-connected disabilities to be \$194,250 per year. Costs would be higher or lower each year depending upon the number of veterans who are eligible to receive the allowance.

As of March 2021, there were 185 blind and otherwise disabled veterans receiving an allowance under the Blind Veterans' Allowance Program and the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans' Allowance Program. Veterans may be eligible for both allowance payments.

Governor Murphy Signs Bill to Increase Annual Payments from State to Certain New Jersey Veterans with Disabilities

09/15/2022

TRENTON – In recognition of increases to the cost of living over the past few decades and in honor of New Jersey’s veterans, Governor Phil Murphy today signed bill [A-1477](#) to increase annual payments from the State to veterans with certain disabilities resulting from their wartime service. Annual payments to eligible veterans will increase from \$750 to \$1,800.

Prior to the bill becoming law, payments to veterans with certain disabilities covered under the Paraplegic and Hemiplegic Veterans’ Allowance program had not increased since 1981, while payments to blind veterans covered under the Blind Veterans’ Allowance Program had not increased since 1971.

“A lot has changed over the past several decades, and it is important for our State to keep up with the rising cost of living in our support for New Jersey veterans,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Veterans who were disabled in the line of duty made an immeasurable sacrifice on behalf of our nation. Ensuring these veterans receive the financial assistance they need and deserve from our state is how we can honor that sacrifice.”

“Thanks to the hard work of advocates, Governor Murphy, and the Legislature, this benefit will help our Garden State veterans grappling each day with some of wartime’s most catastrophic physical injuries,” **said Brig. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, D.O, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veteran Affairs**. “This benefit will certainly support the quality of life of those who have sacrificed so much for our country.”

Funding to enable this change in payments to eligible veterans was a part of the Governor’s initial FY23 budget proposal and was included in the final budget signed in June 2022.

This law will help approximately 200 veterans in New Jersey. [Benefits](#) eligibility includes veterans with loss of sight, amputations of hands, feet or limbs, osteochondritis, multiple sclerosis, permanent paralysis in their limbs or certain portions of the body.

The increase will take place on January 1, 2023.

Sponsors of the bill include Senators Linda Greenstein and Michael Testa, and Assembly members Daniel Benson, Anthony Verrelli, and Raj Mukherji.

“Veterans with service-connected disabilities sacrificed so much to protect our country and deserve compensation for their efforts,” **said Senator Greenstein**. “Several decades have gone by since these payments to veterans have been increased. Considering the exponential increases seen in cost of living over the years, this is unacceptable. While the increase of compensation in this bill cannot fully repay the sacrifice our disabled veterans gave, it can hopefully provide some aid as they live out the rest of their lives.”

“I am proud this legislation will be signed into law. It is our duty to ensure the well-being of New Jersey’s veterans and their spouses,” **said Senator Testa**. “Some veterans have suffered significant disabilities in the line of duty including permanent paralysis and loss of sight. This law will offer some much needed financial relief and stability to these injured veterans and their loved ones during their time of need.”

“This annual allowance increase is long overdue,” **said Assemblymen Benson, Verrelli, and Mukherji in a joint statement**. “\$750 does not stretch as far as it used to and it is time we acknowledge that by providing our disabled veterans with the financial assistance they have earned. After everything these veterans have sacrificed for our country, we owe it to them to do all that we can to help them support themselves and their families.”