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RWH/JA

P.L. 2019, CHAPTER 206, *approved August 5, 2019*
Senate, No. 2447

1 AN ACT concerning federal military service member and veteran
2 housing allowances and designated as the Securing Electronic
3 Records for Veterans Ease Act, and supplementing chapter 8 of
4 Title 46 of the Revised Statutes.

5

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

8

9 1. a. A landlord, or any agent thereof, shall count a military
10 or veteran housing allowance, supported by United States
11 Department of Veterans Affairs documentation, as income for
12 purposes of determining whether a qualified prospective tenant
13 meets any minimum income qualifications to rent housing from the
14 landlord.

15 b. As used in this section:

16 “Landlord” means any person who rents or leases or offers to
17 rent or lease, for a term of at least one month, dwelling units.

18 “Military” means the Armed Forces of the United States,
19 including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast
20 Guard, the National Guard and any other reserve component of the
21 armed forces, and the merchant marine when organized under the
22 federal law as a public military force.

23 “Military or veteran housing allowance” means any federal
24 housing allowance or stipend provided to a service member of the
25 military or a veteran, including, but not limited to, the basic
26 allowance for housing authorized pursuant to 37 U.S.C. s.403 and
27 the housing stipend authorized pursuant to 38 U.S.C. s.3313.

28 “Qualified prospective tenant” means any service member of the
29 military or a veteran who is receiving a military or veteran housing
30 allowance.

31 “Veteran” means a person who has served on active duty in the
32 Armed Forces of the United States and who was discharged or
33 released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

34

35 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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40 This bill, designated as the Securing Electronic Records for
41 Veterans Ease (“SERVE”) Act, would require landlords and their
42 agents to count any federal military or veteran housing allowance as
43 income when determining whether a prospective tenant who is a
44 military service member or veteran meets any applicable minimum

1 income qualifications to rent housing from the landlord. The
2 SERVE Act bill would help military service members and veterans
3 secure rental housing. In particular, this bill would be of benefit to
4 full-time students who often have limited or no income.

5 In order to avail themselves of the provisions of this bill, a
6 military service member or veteran would have to furnish
7 documentation issued by the United States Department of Veterans
8 Affairs to the landlord that demonstrates they are receiving a federal
9 military or veteran housing allowance.

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14 Requires landlords to count federal military service member and
15 veteran housing allowances as income for purposes of qualifying
16 for rental housing; designated as Securing Electronic Records for
17 Veterans Ease Act.

SENATE, No. 2447

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED APRIL 5, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator PATRICK J. DIEGNAN, JR.

District 18 (Middlesex)

Senator JEFF VAN DREW

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

Assemblyman JOHN ARMATO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Co-Sponsored by:

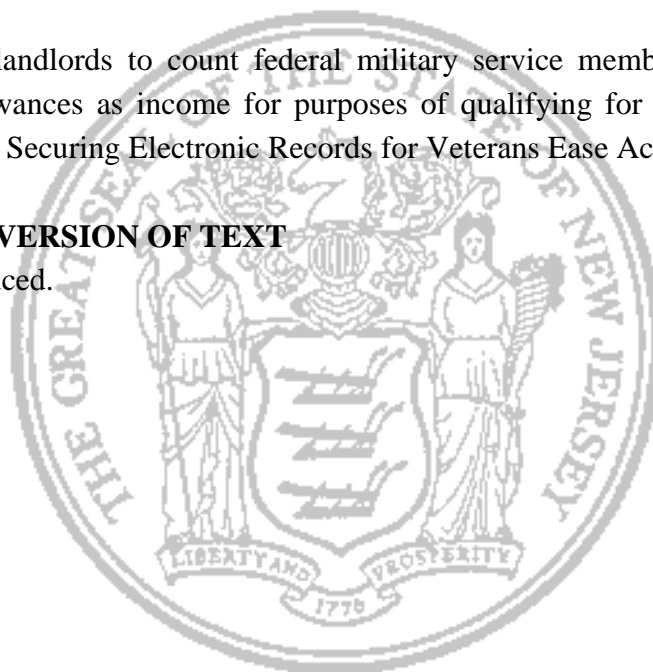
Senators Pennacchio, Singleton, Assemblyman Peters, Assemblywomen Pinkin, McKnight, Assemblymen Wirths and Space

SYNOPSIS

Requires landlords to count federal military service member and veteran housing allowances as income for purposes of qualifying for rental housing; designated as Securing Electronic Records for Veterans Ease Act.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2019)

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45 income qualifications to rent housing from the landlord. The
46 SERVE Act bill would help military service members and veterans
47 secure rental housing. In particular, this bill would be of benefit to
48 full-time students who often have limited or no income.

S2447 DIEGNAN, VAN DREW

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1 In order to avail themselves of the provisions of this bill, a
2 military service member or veteran would have to furnish
3 documentation issued by the United States Department of Veterans
4 Affairs to the landlord that demonstrates they are receiving a federal
5 military or veteran housing allowance.

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2447

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 10, 2019

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2447.

This bill, designated as the Securing Electronic Records for Veterans Ease ("SERVE") Act, would require landlords and their agents to count any federal military or veteran housing allowance as income when determining whether a prospective tenant who is a military service member or veteran meets any applicable minimum income qualifications to rent housing from the landlord. The SERVE Act bill would help military service members and veterans secure rental housing. In particular, this bill would be of benefit to full-time students who often have limited or no income.

In order to avail themselves of the provisions of this bill, a military service member or veteran would have to furnish documentation issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to the landlord that demonstrates they are receiving a federal military or veteran housing allowance.

Senate Bill No. 2447 is identical to Assembly Bill No. 3841 of 2018-2019.

SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2447

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 14, 2018

The Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2447.

This bill, designated as the Securing Electronic Records for Veterans Ease (“SERVE”) Act, would require landlords and their agents to count any federal military or veteran housing allowance as income when determining whether a prospective tenant who is a military service member or veteran meets any applicable minimum income qualifications to rent housing from the landlord. The SERVE Act bill would help military service members and veterans secure rental housing. In particular, this bill would be of benefit to full-time students who often have limited or no income.

In order to avail themselves of the provisions of this bill, a military service member or veteran would have to furnish documentation issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to the landlord that demonstrates they are receiving a federal military or veteran housing allowance.

ASSEMBLY, No. 3841

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED APRIL 12, 2018

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOHN ARMATO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblyman Peters, Assemblywomen Pinkin, McKnight, Assemblymen
Wirths and Space**

SYNOPSIS

Requires landlords to count federal military service member and veteran housing allowances as income for purposes of qualifying for rental housing; designated as Securing Electronic Records for Veterans Ease Act.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2019)

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A3841 ARMATO, MAZZEO

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4 Affairs to the landlord that demonstrates they are receiving a federal
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ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3841

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 10, 2019

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3841.

This bill, designated as the Securing Electronic Records for Veterans Ease ("SERVE") Act, would require landlords and their agents to count any federal military or veteran housing allowance as income when determining whether a prospective tenant who is a military service member or veteran meets any applicable minimum income qualifications to rent housing from the landlord. The SERVE Act bill would help military service members and veterans secure rental housing. In particular, this bill would be of benefit to full-time students who often have limited or no income.

In order to avail themselves of the provisions of this bill, a military service member or veteran would have to furnish documentation issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to the landlord that demonstrates they are receiving a federal military or veteran housing allowance.

Assembly Bill No. 3841 is identical to Senate Bill No. 2447 of 2018-2019.

Acting Governor Oliver Signs Legislation to Support New Jersey Veterans

08/05/2019

TRENTON – Acting Governor Sheila Oliver today signed five pieces of legislation furthering the Murphy-Oliver Administration's commitment to support more than 435,000 veterans who call New Jersey home.

"Today, we are backing up our words with action by signing five important pieces of legislation for our service women and men," **said Acting Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs.** "From expanding veterans' property tax deductions to directing the provision of free legal services for veterans at risk of becoming homeless, these new laws put New Jersey on the right path for supporting those who have served our country."

The following bills were signed into law:

- **S1331 (Gopal, Madden/Houghtaling, Downey, Danielsen)** - Extends eligibility for veterans' property tax deduction to exemption to residents of continuing care retirement communities.
- **S2447 (Diegnan/Armato, Mazzeo, Murphy)** - Requires landlords to count federal military service member and veteran housing allowances as income for purposes of qualifying for rental housing; designated as Securing Electronic Records for Veterans Ease Act.
- **S2525 (Singleton, Cunningham/Armato, Mukherji, Danielsen)** - Directs Adjutant General to enter into agreements with legal services organizations to provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness.
- **A4095 (Houghtaling, Downey, Space/Gopal)** - Grants veteran discharged under honorable conditions right to peddler's license.
- **SJR86 (Singleton/Armato, Mazzeo, DeAngelo)** - Honors American Legion on 100th anniversary of its founding.

The legislation signed addresses a range of services including from providing property tax relief to honoring the 100th Anniversary of the American Legion. Another bill directs the Adjutant General to work with legal service organizations, to provide combat veteran homelessness.

"New Jersey is committed to ensuring that we honor our brave men and women for their service, not just in words, but through action," **said New Jersey Adjutant General Jemal Beale.** "I thank the Acting Governor for signing this important legislation to support our veterans who have sacrificed so much for this nation."

Regarding S1331:

"To serve our country is to commit your life to our national values, freedoms and safety, no matter the cost," **said Senator Vin Gopal.** "This courageous and selfless act deserves to be acknowledged at all levels of our society, whether that means cutting veterans a break on their property taxes or expanding their access to career opportunities. No action is too big or small when we are thanking those who have sacrificed so much for us."

"The veterans' property tax deduction is an extension of our state's appreciation for our veterans," **said Senator Fred Madden.** "These folks, whether they own their home or not, risked their lives for this country and while \$250 may not seem like a large sum, when someone is in a retirement community, often living on a fixed income, every dollar counts."

"Our veterans have done so much for us, it is simply the least we can do to give them the same assistance we give to current homeowners," **said Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling.** "The goal of this law is to make a simple fix to offer all of our veterans the same benefit whether they own a home or live in a continuing care retirement community."

"Many veterans are discharged and end up experiencing significant financial hardships," **said Assemblywoman Joann Downey.** "This law will help veterans and their families by giving them just a little extra assistance to live in communities that can give them the care they not only need but deserve."

"Extending property tax deductions and exemptions for veterans living in continuing care retirement communities is absolutely the right thing to do," **said Assemblyman Joe Danielsen.** "Veterans have sacrificed for our country and

we should thank them by helping them any way we can.”

Regarding S2447:

“The benefit of this law is that it will help veterans secure rental housing,” **said Assemblyman John Armato**. “It is also beneficial to those military service members or veterans who are full-time students who often have limited or no income.”

“Our veterans have made so many sacrifices for our country,” **said Assemblyman Vincent Mazzeo**. “We should always look for ways to make their lives easier. They have earned and deserve such consideration.”

“Our nation and our state must continuously show our veterans that they are appreciated,” **said Assemblywoman Carol Murphy**. “This country is better, safer and freer because of our military. As a nation, we owe them a tremendous debt.”

Regarding S2525:

“New Jersey has between 1,500 and 2,000 homeless veterans,” **said Assemblyman John Armato, a U.S. Air Force veteran who served in the Philippines Islands and Korea**. “These statistics are unacceptable, and this law looks to correct such disturbing figures by helping these veterans get the services that they need and deserve.”

“It is unconscionable that we allow veterans to be homeless considering the sacrifices they have made to safeguard our liberties,” **said Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, a former Sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps**. “In many instances, the stress and frustration that veterans experience are related to a lack of services or awareness that they exist. By helping more veterans income-qualify for rental housing, this law will help eliminate a few more roadblocks in their lives.”

“Sadly, our veterans comprise some of the highest rates of unemployment, homelessness and suicide in our communities,” **said Assemblyman Joe Danielsen, who served in the U.S. Army Reserves’ 78th Division here in New Jersey and comes from a long line of veterans in his family**. “We must continue looking for ways to better serve our veterans, and this legislation is a step in the right direction.”

“Those who have put their life on the line to protect our country should be provided with legal representation when they’re at risk of losing their home,” **said Senator Sandra Cunningham**. “Veterans deserve an advocate when it relates to their well-being, their safety or the security of their family.”

“The veterans’ property tax deduction is an extension of our state’s appreciation for our veterans,” **said Senator Fred Madden**. “These folks, whether they own their home or not, risked their lives for this country and while \$250 may not seem like a large sum, when someone is in a retirement community, often living on a fixed income, every dollar counts.”

Regarding A0495:

“This isn’t about giving them a free license, it’s giving them an opportunity,” **said Assemblyman Parker Space**. “More men and women who stepped up to serve our country can be their own boss, earn extra income and even grow their venture into a food truck or brick-and-mortar business.”

Regarding SJR 86:

“It is unacceptable to allow our veterans to go from serving our country to living on the streets when they come home,” **said Senator Troy Singleton**. “Our veterans sacrificed time away from their families, friends and work in defense of our freedom so we must do everything possible to assist them during difficult and trying times in their lives. They deserve to be treated with dignity and should have the best services at their disposable.”

“Over the past 100 years, the American Legion has made a considerable mark on American culture,” **said Assemblyman John Armato**. “From influencing social change to starting programs for youth to advocating for veterans, the Legion has changed the lives of so many people. I applaud the Legion for reaching this milestone, and look forward to seeing it grow for years to come.”

“What began as a small patriotic veteran’s organization has flourished into an over two million-strong nonprofit spanning all fifty states and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico and the Philippines,” **said Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo**. “The patriots of the American Legion work tirelessly to serve veterans and make a positive impact in their communities, and their efforts should be celebrated today and every day.”

“The American Legion represents the very best of America; the people who’ve served their country bravely, and gone on to continue their service through community-based advocacy,” **said Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo.** “We salute the American Legion and all it has achieved for our entire nation.”

“The American Legion is the nation’s largest veterans service organization with 295 American Legion Posts in New Jersey,” **said New Jersey American Legion State Commander Robert Newell.** “Since 1919, we have supported America’s service members and veterans, their families, and the communities we live in. We thank Acting Governor Oliver and the New Jersey legislature for their leadership and commitment of service to those who have served, those currently serving, and the communities of this great state.”

