

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 126

PRINTER NO. 16

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund
Motor License Fund
Other Special Funds

DATE INTRODUCED

January 9, 2023

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Mastriano

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 126 amends Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to exclude veterans' benefit payments from income calculations for any Commonwealth program.

This legislation amends Title 51 by adding a new Chapter 99 (Veterans' Benefit Payment Exclusion). A new Section 9902 (relating to exclusion) provides that 100% of a veteran's benefit payment may not be included as income for any Commonwealth program. Additionally, the exclusion extends to an unmarried surviving spouse upon the death of a veteran for any compensation the spouse is entitled to receive.

"Commonwealth program" is defined as a program administered by the Commonwealth that requires, as a condition for eligibility, the inclusion of an individual's income.

"Veterans' benefit payment" is defined as compensation or payment received by a veteran that is directly related to or the result of the veteran's service-connected disability as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or benefits provided to a veteran by a Commonwealth agency or authorized under the laws of the Commonwealth.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Enactment of this legislation will have no fiscal impact on Commonwealth funds as Commonwealth programs fall into one of the following categories:

1. Commonwealth programs that already exclude veterans' benefit payments as income, such as the Pennsylvania Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program and the prescription assistance programs PACE and PACENET;
2. Programs that have income eligibility guidelines that are based upon specific, federally established criteria, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); and

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3. Commonwealth programs that require applicants to demonstrate financial need but do not specifically list income eligibility requirements, such as the following programs within the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs:
 - Disabled Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption;
 - Veteran Temporary Assistance;
 - Military Family Relief and Assistance Program; and
 - Educational Gratuity Program.