

Good afternoon, my name is Bob Stone, and I am the CT State Captain for the Patriot Guard as well as a United States Army Veteran. I am here today to support Bill No. 6060. You may have heard about The Patriot Guard, but for those of you that have not, the PGR is an organization 80,000 strong across America who solemnly come together to show respect and support for the young men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of their country.

The PGR would still exist even if there were no protestors but our inception was in direct response to the Westboro Baptist Church who chose to utilize military funerals as a platform to move their radical religious agenda.

For the record, the PGR does not believe that we need to suppress freedom of speech. In fact many of us here today fought to preserve this freedom. However we do believe that there is a more appropriate forum for this constitutional right to be exercised rather than that of a military funeral.

The passing of a loved one is hard for any family to endure, however for a military family it can be even more painful because of the abrupt nature of the loss. A funeral of this nature should be treated with the highest respect

for loved ones and be remembered as a lasting tribute for the deceased. It should not be a media event to promote political or religious agendas.

I do not believe that it is too much to ask, that after we send our sons and daughters off to war, and they do not return home to their families alive, that we provide some assured comfort prior to laying them to rest in the land that they gave their life for.

These soldiers went off to war so their families and others would not. I ask you to support their sacrifice and in so doing you will help provide the peace that these soldiers deserve as well as the assurance that their families will not need to fight a battle without them.

On behalf of all Americans, the PGR and the citizens of the Great State of Connecticut who chose to stand for their country, I implore you to support this bill.

Thank you