

**Testimony by Dan Diaz in favor of Raised Bill 58-68, AAC Recruiting in High Schools  
March 10, 2008**

Greeting members of the committee, my name is Dan Diaz. I'm here to support the bill introduced by Representative Andy Fleishman.

I want to share two experiences that highlight why I support this bill.

First I would like to say that I come from quite a large proud hard working Puerto Rican family on my mother's side. My generation of the family grew up for the most part in Bridgeport, CT. Many of the young boys in my family were naturally drawn by the honor and prestige that comes with service in the Armed Forces. I had several uncles who had served at various times and in various different branches of the military. Many of my cousins and I grew up believing in the defense of our Nation and honoring that tradition. I, unlike my cousins, however also did very well academically in High School. So instead of joining the Marines right out of high school, which I originally intended, I went to UConn. Five of my cousins however joined the military. Four joined the U.S. Marines Corp and one the Army National Guard. There was a pretty consistent pattern that I saw with all my cousins. Not long after being approached by recruiters it wasn't uncommon for them to appear to join the family. They would be at barbeques, come to church services, and even show up at family functions. In short they would really seem to be everywhere and involved with everything. At times, mostly my aunts would even find the sudden close relationship to be disconcerting. Almost every cousin would tell of the amazing adventures and skills they were going to learn while in service. Every cousin I had was never anything other than infantry. The recruiters were very quick to promise the world. My cousins all felt much slighted by what they were actually forced to do once in the service, some even knew before they went in that they had been lied to.

My second point regards many of those I have met since. I work with a lot of students all over CT. From Connecticut College to Capitol Community to UConn and many high schools. There are a lot of students who are veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are quite a few who feel very lied to. I know a woman from UConn who served in Iraq as a medic who feels as if she was not told truthfully about what she was getting into. I know of a kid from Hartford who despite joining the military, spent half his summer canvassing to end the War in Iraq. Not exactly acting like someone who knew what they were signing themselves up for. My girlfriend works in Northend of Hartford, she tells me stories about people who constantly get mailings or phone calls even after repeated attempts to show no interest at all in joining up all because they talked to a recruiter one time. People are unaware of their rights and recruiters, under the tremendous pressures with the War in Iraq and Afghanistan, will push the limits to sign people up. There needs to be limitations for their sake, our own and for the sake of the military.