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FEBRUARY 3, 2009

Senator Andrew Maynard, Co-Chair  
Representative Ted Graziani, Co-Chair  
Honorable Members  
Connecticut Select Committee on Veterans Affairs  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, Connecticut 06105

IN RE: Testimony regarding Proposed H.B. No. 5295 and H.B. No. 5664 ~~§~~ *H.B. 5739*

Good morning Sen. Maynard, Rep. Graziani, and members of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs. My name is Robert Moeller and I am President of the Connecticut Chapter, Association of the United States Army. The Connecticut Chapter has been existence since April 22, 1959. It has 641 members, 6 Sustaining Corporate Members, which include Sikorsky Aircraft, Atlantic Inertial Systems, Colt Firearms, Goodrich, Hamilton Sunstrand, Ensign Bickford; and 22 Corporate Members. AUSA is a private professional, non-profit educational organization, and is the only non-profit organization dedicated to support the Army – Active, National Guard, Army Reserve, Department of the Army Civilians, Retirees, Family members, and Veterans. I am also a retired Command Sergeant Major with 41 ½ years of service, both active duty and with the Connecticut Army National Guard, and I am here to offer testimony on two bills before you.

I'd like to start with Proposed H.B. 5295, An Act Concerning Additional Pay for Active Service After September 11, 2001. In 2007, a Proposed Bill No. 6949 was introduced to amend the General Statutes to provide a service bonus to members of the United States Armed Forces on active duty, including, but not limited to the National Guard on active duty, and add a \$1,000.00 Combat Zone bonus. The result was a substitute bill that only increased the bonus amount and further disenfranchised Connecticut citizens serving in the five branches of our military forces and their reserve components. The current law enacted in 2005 has placed a price on the service of one group and nothing on others creating, as one individual stated, groups of "have and have nots". In West Hartford, at the Reserve Center, you have a National Guard and several Army Reserve units, most all of both groups have served in OIF or OEF, some more than once. You have families, such as a family in East Hartford, with a daughter in the Air National Guard and a son in the Army Reserve; another family, living in Woodbury, had a son in Afghanistan with the Army National Guard and his brother serving in Iraq with the Marines from Plainville, CT, one has, the other has not. CPT Robert Devito, of Tolland was awarded the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award by President Bush, for his service in Iraq, but he is not entitled to the CT Bonus. Staff Sergeant Terry Rathburn, a Maine wounded in Fallujah, is not qualified for the Combat Zone payment. I would imagine that there are many more such stories. I know the bottom line is numbers and money. As far as numbers, I believe that roughly there are approximately 500 military reservists, who are Connecticut residents, and called served on Active Duty. Most of the Connecticut based reserve units have members from all the surrounding states. Also many reservists are called to Active Duty as individuals and sent to other units to fill unoccupied positions. They don't have the luxury of going overseas with their

friends and neighbors. Some States, such as Massachusetts, have bonus programs, but they recognize residents who have served in all branches of the military. An example is a Mass. resident in the CT National Guard can collect from both States, however, a CT resident in the National Guard of another State, collects nothing. It's amazing that the State can find millions of dollars for land purchase, as published last week in a news article, but they can't find money to pay a combat zone bonus to reservists, who volunteered to fight for their country and our freedoms. If you look at a combat uniform of any service person, over the left pocket it designates the branch of service, which is preceded by two words, United States. Oh yes, one more thing, the individual who administers the bonus program isn't eligible for the bonus, he's an Army Reservist.

I would like to read a letter that I received from SFC Paul Mozzocato, who was not able to testify today. He is an AGR member of the Army Reserve, who is on duty in New Hampshire and lives in South Windsor.

In closing, in 2005 a mistake occurred and Connecticut reservists were underserved and for three years, attempts were made to overcome this oversight. The stock answers were; this is not a budget year or there will be no new spending. The sands of time are running out and unless this issue is resolved now, it will never come to fruition and Connecticut reservists along with their active duty counterparts will continue to be underserved by the State of Connecticut.

Proposed H.B. No 5664 An Act Concerning the Award of Ribbons and Medals to Certain Veterans for Service in Time of War concern the CT and New England Chapter of Laos Veterans of America. These valiant men fought in the Viet Nam war for the American Forces. Twenty-five of these veterans are members of the Connecticut Chapter of the Association of the United State Army. Many of them live in towns surrounding Hartford. They are extremely patriotic and they march every year in the Hartford Veterans Day Parade and also participated in Memorial Day parades in South Windsor and other communities. BG Dan McHale will be testifying on their behalf. After his testimony, you will understand why they should be qualified to wear the Connecticut Wartime Veterans Service Medal. I strongly support this Bill.

I wish to thank you for your time and careful consideration of the legislation before you, and I will answer and question you may have of me.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert C. Moeller  
CSM, AUS-ret  
President

Addendum: Proposed H.B. 5139

Proposed H.B. 5139 An Act Concerning the 100% Deductibility of Veterans' Pensions.

Many military retirees look for areas to retire that give them the most benefits to live on their retirement pay. Good employment, affordable housing, low taxes, etc. One to those enticements is that their military retirement will not be taxed. The State of Connecticut could be attractive to these servicemen and women, who, after twenty or more years of voluntary service to their country, bring a strong work ethic, expertise in many and various skills. It is my recommendation that strong consideration be given this legislation.

February 1, 2009

Paul R. Mozzicato  
40 Quarry Brook Drive  
South Windsor, CT 06074

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Substitute House Bill No. 6949, House Act No. 07-187

I am writing today to articulate my opinion/concern as to the prejudice nature of this Bill. I am an "active" US Army Reserve Soldier (USAR) and a TAX Payer to the State of Connecticut. The National Guard and the Army Reserve are listed in ALL US ARMY Doctrine as "Reserve Forces" for this reason I believe that this Bill is unfair and prejudicial to all US ARMY Reservist who live, work and pay taxes to the State of Connecticut.

Why is this Bill that is clearly titled as an act that administers bonus money from a Soldiers, Sailors and Marines fund, not being offered to USAR members who reside and pay tax to this state? When I served over seas in an active "Combat Zone" I worked side by side with other Reserve Forces that included Connecticut National Guard Members. Why is it that they are to receive preferential treatment over me? Why is my tax money going to them only and not being offered to Soldiers like me? Maybe you can offer me an income reduction towards my state filing?

I demand that you relook this and be fair to members of "Reserve Forces" that reside in the State Of Connecticut. We fight the "War on Terror" just like everyone else. I am of the opinion that our Families suffrage and stressors are greater than our Active Duty (A/C) counter parts. We are all going through transformation and new Military Doctrine has been written that shifts "Reserve Forces" to "operational Forces" with predetermined mobilization cycles.

Very Respectfully,

Paul R. Mozzicato  
SFC, USAR

**Bob Moeller**

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From: "Dana, Lou M SFC RES USAR USARS" [mailto:poma@us.army.mil]  
 To: "Bob Moeller" [mailto:com01@comcast]  
 Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2009 9:42 AM  
 Subject: Re: Fw: Letter

~~SI~~

~~I can't save the letter in PDF format. I am attaching it to the email.~~

February 2, 2009  
 Lou M. Poma  
 33 Daisy Lane  
 South Windsor, CT 06074

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Substitute House Bill No. 6949, House Act No. 07-187

I am submitting this letter regarding my opinion of the treatment of Military Reserve Members versus CT Army National Guard Soldiers, and the preferential treatment Guard Soldiers receive through Substitute House Bill No. 6949, House Act No. 07-187.

I have a total of over seventeen years of active Army, CT National Guard, and US Army Reserve time. I also have three combat deployments, two of which have been as an Army Reservist. All of my combat deployments have taken me to Iraq.

The current bill is unfair as it is biased toward all other military Reserve service members who when deployed face the same dangers as National Guardsman. Throughout my seventeen years of service, I have never met anyone with a; CT Army National Guard or Army Reserve tab on their left chest. Everyone's left tab states; US Army. The same is true for the US Marines, and the US Air Force.

Can you please explain the differences to me between a CT National Guardsman, a US Army Reservist, a US Marine Reservist, a US Naval Reservist, and a US Air Force Reservist. They can all be CT residents and pay taxes in the state of CT. Any of these services members can be called to federal activation and deployed in support of one numerous operations. Any of these service members can also be seriously injured or killed during the time of war. Our great state has not been immune to this as we have all seen our flag flown several times at half mast during the past eight years for fallen comrades. If all of this is true, why is there a difference in how one receives preferential treatment from the state over another because they are a member of the National Guard?

I understand the current budget crisis. If something isn't provided now, maybe something for the current and future Soldiers who will fill in my shoes after I leave. A suggestion would be additional tax breaks for all uniformed service members of all the military branches.

Respectfully,

SFC Lou M. Poma  
 SFC, USAR

2/3/2009