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Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of SB 371, I.D. Cards for Veterans; HB 5115, Posthumous Medals; and HB 5955, Assistance to Veterans' Organizations From the Energy Efficiency Fund

Before the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Public Hearing February 10, 2011

I am pleased to cosponsor Sen. Len Fasano's bill, SB 371, Concerning Identification Cards for Veterans, on behalf of constituent John Anzidei of Wallingford. John requested an easily recognized, government issued identification card so that veterans may take advantage of special discounts offered by retail chains and local merchants. I am aware the committee is investigating several options, including a veterans' identification mark on drivers' licenses or added to the DMV identity card for non-drivers. In a difficult budget year, I encourage the committee to be flexible and choose the most cost-effective method of identifying veterans so this bill may have a bright future.

On behalf of veterans and their surviving family members, I also endorse HB 5115, AAC the Posthumous Award of Ribbons and Medals to Veterans for Service in Time of War. In some cases, veterans did not live long enough to take part in the extensive medal ceremonies held around the state. Their families would be honored to accept a posthumous medal on behalf of their loved one. The committee may wish to start with WWII veterans and those who served after that war in order to reduce costs of the program this year.

Local veterans organizations would benefit from the cost-saving possibilities of HB 5955, AAC Assistance to Veterans' Organizations From the CT Energy Efficiency Fund. We know that it is possible to reduce energy costs by as much as one-third with a professional audit and a performance based contract to improve the energy efficiency of an old building. Such a savings would improve the budgets of local veterans organizations and the comfort of the veterans who use the facility. The committee did great work last year under the leadership of former Rep. Ted Graziani, and I look forward to another good year from this committee under Sen. Maynard and Rep. Hennessey.