



State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
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SENATOR MICHAEL A. McLACHLAN
TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

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Senator Maynard, Representative Hennessey, and members of the committee:

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am here to speak in favor of **Senate Bill 373: AN ACT CONCERNING THE AWARD OF THE WARTIME SERVICE MEDAL TO MEMBERS OF THE MERCHANT MARINE.**

This bill would award Connecticut Wartime Service Medals to members of The Merchant Marine. In the past, members have not been eligible for this medal.

Our Merchant Mariners have played an active role in the military success of our nation, particularly during World War II, when our Navy was fighting a taxing war in the Pacific.

Our Merchant Mariners act as the auxiliary to the Navy during a time of war. They are responsible for making sure that our troops have the supplies necessary to fight in battle as well as sustain life while on duty. Additionally, they transport troops to and from battleground.

Over the years I've been able to sit down and talk with members of the Merchant Mariners and hear first hand their stories of triumph. Edward Cotter of my hometown of Danbury signed up for the Merchant Mariners to be a radio operator to help his country win World War II. He suspected that he would never see battle first hand from the small room where he radioed coordinates to home bases. However, on the ocean he still saw his fair share of conflict: enemy ships lurking along the horizon, exploding bombs and their fallen debris, men, injured or perished, being brought home to their families.

Additionally, I have worked very closely with Veteran Merchant Mariner John Scalzo on building a Merchant Mariners memorial in Danbury. John joined the Merchant Mariners at the tender age of seventeen, and saw multiple ships sunk on the Pacific and many of his fellow crewmembers killed. The Merchant Mariners memorial was erected and dedicated last August.

It is important now that we honor the men and women who have comprised of our Merchant Mariners. They too deserve to be honored with medals and ribbons for their service in a time of crisis. They too put their lives at risk.

Please join me in taking a step in awarding the heroes of our state and of our nation. It is a great honor to have these brave men and women call Connecticut home. They deserve our full support.

I urge the committee to vote in favor on Bill 373.

Thank you,

Michael A. McLachlan
Senator - 24th District