



National Guard Association of Connecticut
360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795
www.ngact.org

Feb. 28, 2012

Testimony in Favor of Raised Bills 113, 115, 116, 5171, 5172, 5173, 5296 and 5297

Good Morning Sen. Leone, Representative Hennessy and members of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs. I am Debbi Newton, Legislative Chair of the National Guard Association of Connecticut (NGACT). I have served in that position for nine years and have been a member of the Connecticut National Guard for 31 years.

I am here today to speak in favor of several bills currently before you.

Raised Senate Bill 113, An Act Concerning Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Proceedings allows for Members of the Military who are unable to attend court proceedings because of deployments and other military duty to provide video-teleconferencing testimony in certain cases with approval of the judge. Many other states around the country already allow this. For example, a deployed Soldier needs to request a continuance in a divorce case. Without being present, he/she cannot make that request without hiring a lawyer to be present for them. This could present an undue financial hardship on someone in a combat zone who may or may not even have the time and ability to find someone to hire.

Raised Senate Bill 115, An Act Concerning the Military Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program gives the same recognition to the confidential communications between Military members and military sexual assault counselors as is federally recognized. It is a further protection for victims of sexual assault to feel free to seek help within the military community.

Raised Senate Bill 116, An Act Concerning State Military Accounts brings several accounts in line with federal law and makes them auditable. It creates four non-lapsing accounts within the General Fund for monies being collected through various sources and provides accounts and oversight for those funds that are used for such things as maintenance of billeting facilities at Camp Niantic, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, or MWR, for our Soldiers and Airmen.

Raised House Bill 5171, An Act Concerning the Disposition of Remains of Military Personnel. When a member of the military dies or is killed in action, it is a very emotional time for the family members. All Servicemembers complete a DD Form 93 and generally update it annually. The form provides for beneficiaries of unpaid pay and allowances, death gratuities and names the person authorized by the military member to dispose of the body. We are asking that the State of Connecticut legally recognize the

wishes of the Servicemembers as directed on this form. Imagine if you will a Soldier whose parents are divorced and who do not get along and live in different states, or a spouse who does not get along with the parents and lives far from their in-laws. Now imagine those parties fighting over where to bury their loved one or whether to bury or cremate the remains. It brings a great deal more pain and suffering to the family members, delays the Servicemember being laid to rest and may cost a great deal of money in court costs. We urge the State of Connecticut to legally recognize DD Form 93 and the wishes of the Servicemember. (A copy of the Form is attached.)

Raised House Bill 5172, An Act Concerning State Military Service allows for members of the Connecticut National Guard and members of the armed services of the State of Connecticut the same compensation rights for injury or death while serving on State Active Duty as Volunteer Ambulance personnel and Volunteer Firefighters now receive. In the past year, Connecticut Guardsmen have been called out to assist in clearing school roofs of heavy snow, and to provide commodities distribution and route clearing after Tropical Storm Irene and Storm Alfred. During those times, we have had one person fall off a roof and one bitten by a spider. Fortunately, both are fine and have no residual affects from the incidents. This bill recognizes the service of those called out for state active duty and provides them the coverage they need should they be injured or killed while serving their state.

Raised House Bill 5173, An Act Concerning State Military Facilities clarifies existing statute and creates a non-lapsing account in the General Fund for monies collected that are later used for maintenance of the military facilities and brings us into compliance with federal law.

Raised House Bill 5296, An Act Concerning Course Enrollment Fee Waivers for Certain Veterans and Members of the National Guard Enrolled at Charter Oak State College. Several years ago, state law was enacted that provided for tuition waivers at all State Community Colleges, and State Colleges and Universities for members of the National Guard and over the years certain Veterans have been added. According to the Charter Oak State College Website as of this morning, they charge \$250 per Credit to take courses through their program. If Charter Oak State College is indeed a State College, should they still be charging the tuition that has been waived in state statute for National Guard Members and Certain Veterans for years? We respectfully request that this act be passed.

Raised House Bill 5297, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study the Substitution of State Licensing Requirements with Military Occupational Specialty Training for Veterans. Military members, after completion of Basic Training, go to advanced schools where they receive training in their Military Occupational Specialties as they are known in the Army. This is where they learn the skills to become Infantry Soldiers, Medics, Plumbers, Computer Technicians, among hundreds of other specialties. They may become plumbers, electricians, carpenters among many other professional titles, perfectly capable of doing all that those licensed in State of Connecticut can do just as well. However, they may not have been schooled in a civilian environment in those skills and cannot practice their trade in the civilian sector once they return, despite having been schooled and perhaps even having worked in those fields for many years on active duty or while on deployment. This Task Force would take a look at what training these Servicemembers receive to see what can be substituted for civilian requirements towards certification in the state. In a time of high unemployment, especially among Veterans,

this is one thing the State can do to help more Veterans become marketable in less time without sacrificing their time and money to take the same course and receive the same training the US Government has already provided.

I thank you for your time and for what you do for the Veterans, Military Members and Retirees of Connecticut and their families. This concludes my testimony and I am available for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Debbi Newton
Legislative Chair NGA
860-913-5010
legislativeguard@gmail.com

RECORD OF EMERGENCY DATA

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: 5 USC 552, 10 USC 655, 1475 to 1480 and 2771, 38 USC 1970, 44 USC 3101, and EO 9397 (SSN).

PRINCIPAL PURPOSES: This form is used by military personnel and Department of Defense civilian and contractor personnel, collectively referred to as civilians, when applicable. For military personnel, it is used to designate beneficiaries for certain benefits in the event of the Service member's death. It is also a guide for disposition of that member's pay and allowances if captured, missing or interned. It also shows names and addresses of the person(s) the Service member desires to be notified in case of emergency or death. For civilian personnel, it is used to expedite the notification process in the event of an emergency and/or the death of the member. The purpose of soliciting the SSN is to provide positive identification. All items may not be applicable.

ROUTINE USES: None.

DISCLOSURE: Voluntary; however, failure to provide accurate personal identifier information and other solicited information will delay notification and the processing of benefits to designated beneficiaries if applicable.

INSTRUCTIONS TO SERVICE MEMBER

This extremely important form is to be used by you to show the names and addresses of your spouse, children, parents, and any other person(s) you would like notified if you become a casualty (other family members or fiancé), and, to designate beneficiaries for certain benefits if you die. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to keep your Record of Emergency Data up to date to show your desires as to beneficiaries to receive certain death payments, and to show changes in your family or other personnel listed, for example, as a result of marriage, civil court action, death, or address change.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CIVILIANS

This extremely important form is to be used by you to show the names and addresses of your spouse, children, parents, and any other person(s) you would like notified if you become a casualty. Not every item on this form is applicable to you. **This form is used by the Department of Defense (DoD) to expedite notification in the case of emergencies or death.** It does not have a legal impact on other forms you may have completed with the DoD or your employer.

IMPORTANT: This form is divided into two sections: Section 1 - Emergency Contact Information and Section 2 - Benefits Related Information. READ THE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGES 3 AND 4 BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM.

SECTION 1 - EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

1. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)		2. SSN	
3a. SERVICE/CIVILIAN CATEGORY <input type="checkbox"/> ARMY <input type="checkbox"/> NAVY <input type="checkbox"/> MARINE CORPS <input type="checkbox"/> AIR FORCE <input type="checkbox"/> DoD <input type="checkbox"/> CIVILIAN <input type="checkbox"/> CONTRACTOR			b. REPORTING UNIT CODE/DUTY STATION
4a. SPOUSE NAME (If applicable) (Last, First, Middle Initial) <input type="checkbox"/> SINGLE <input type="checkbox"/> DIVORCED <input type="checkbox"/> WIDOWED		b. ADDRESS (Include ZIP Code) AND TELEPHONE NUMBER	
5. CHILDREN a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. RELATIONSHIP	c. DATE OF BIRTH (YYYYMMDD)	d. ADDRESS (Include ZIP Code) AND TELEPHONE NUMBER
6a. FATHER NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. ADDRESS (Include ZIP Code) AND TELEPHONE NUMBER		
7a. MOTHER NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. ADDRESS (Include ZIP Code) AND TELEPHONE NUMBER		
8a. DO NOT NOTIFY DUE TO ILL HEALTH	b. NOTIFY INSTEAD		
9a. DESIGNATED PERSON(S) (Military only)	b. ADDRESS (Include ZIP Code) AND TELEPHONE NUMBER		
10. CONTRACTING AGENCY AND TELEPHONE NUMBER (Contractors only)			

