

## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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#### S.B. 198 AN ACT CONCERNING DESECRATION OF WAR OR VETERANS' MEMORIALS.

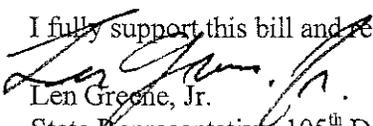
I am here today to address an ever growing problem here in our state in which individuals target property that contains copper, bronze and other valuable metals, steal it and sell it for scrap. The most egregious example of this occurred in three separate towns of the Naugatuck River Valley this past fall. Over the course of a few weeks the towns of Ansonia, Derby and Shelton were victimized by thieves who stole War Memorial Monuments designed to permanently commemorate the heroic actions of many of the Valley's bravest. Some of those honored by these monuments, a man awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II, one of the first captains of the U.S.S. Constitution, in the War of 1812, and several Ansonia men who never made it home.

The nature of this crime has truly struck home with our residents in the Valley, particularly those who served with their friends and their families. The lack of sensitivity and respect to our veterans is abundantly clear in this case, but what is often not considered is the impact such a crime can have on the local community as a whole. Each year we hold events meant to honor our veterans, and often times these monuments serve as tangible reminders of their sacrifice. Therefore, in my opinion, any crime against the community as a whole should be subject to stricter penalties because of it.

I wholeheartedly support the provision in S.B 198 that doubles the penalties associated with such a crime. In doing so, we as a state are acknowledging that Veterans Memorials are in fact worth more to our communities than the simple material value of the monument.

Additionally, I believe it to be of the utmost importance that we create a form of restitution to those communities that have been affected by this crime. Requiring full restitution for damages will help those communities rebuild or repair their monuments, helping to make those communities whole once again.

I fully support this bill and respectfully urge the committee to do so as well.

  
Len Greene, Jr.  
State Representative, 105<sup>th</sup> District