



## State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE THEMIS KLARIDES  
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 4200  
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

HOME: (203) 735-5911  
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423  
FAX: (860) 240-0207

EMAIL: Themis.Klarides@housegop.ct.gov

DEPUTY REPUBLICAN LEADER

MEMBER  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
EXECUTIVE & LEGISLATIVE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT

### **S.B. 198, An Act Concerning Desecration Of War Or Veterans' Memorials** **Select Committee on Veterans Affairs** **Public Hearing Testimony** **February 28, 2012**

Senator Leone, Senator Slossberg, Senator Welch, Representative Hennessy, Representative Nicasastro, Representative Adinolfi and Members of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs:

I am sorry I cannot be with you today to personally communicate my support for this bill, but thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

For some reason, perhaps given our difficult economy, there is a trend in the State of Connecticut involving the theft of property that contains copper, bronze and other valuable metals. These valuable metals are stolen and then sold for scrap. Two sources of these metals are war and veterans' monuments and memorials found on numerous town greens as well as veterans' cemeteries throughout our state.

In late 2011, over the course of several weeks, the towns of Ansonia, Derby and Shelton fell victim to the theft or desecration of their veterans' war monuments and memorials erected in honor of many of their bravest and most honorable citizens who served their country, some of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The actions of those who intentionally desecrate any war or veterans' monument or memorial are not only illegal but highly disrespectful and unpatriotic. The penalties for this type of crime should be strengthened and increased to separate them from those of other forms of vandalism and theft. That is what SB 198 seeks to do, proposing changes to Subsection (e) of Section 46a-58 of the Connecticut General Statutes, which currently states:

**Page Two**  
**Testimony on SB 198**  
**AAC Concerning Desecration of War Or Veterans' Memorials**

“Any person who violates this law shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor, except that if property is damaged as a consequence of such violation in an amount in excess of one thousand dollars, such person shall be guilty of a class D felony.”

SB 198 would double the fine under this subsection and allow the court to require full restitution for all costs of repair and replacement of the property damaged in violation of this section if that property is a war or veterans' memorial or monument.

I believe this is a fitting change to the existing statute, which will help compensate towns for the repair or replacement of their memorials and monuments as well as honor the veterans and war heroes for whom those memorials were erected.

I respectfully request your thoughtful review and consideration of this legislative proposal and that you support its passage out of your committee.

Sincerely,



Themis Klarides  
Deputy House Republican Leader

TK/pb