

Testimony of Jay Bartolomei

S.B. No. 211 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SOLDIERS, SAILORS  
AND MARINES FUND

My name is Jay Bartolomei, President of AFSCME Local 714, Council 4.

I ask to amend SB 211, An Act Concerning the Soldiers Sailor Marine Fund . to restore the Soldier, Sailors, and Marines Fund back to being administered by the state as a state agency.

I represent 1,000 state employees including the workers at the Soldiers Sailors Marine Fund.

I represent these state employees who do the work to administer the Fund. They are dedicated government professionals; helping veterans of this state access much needed benefits of this fund. They are not employees of an outside entity and are intent on providing veterans the best possible service throughout Connecticut.

The amended bill would stop the transfer of this fund to the American Legion, an organization that is not a government agency, but a private organization that relies on memberships to sustain its operations.

Simply put, these state employees will be laid off if this bill does not pass into law.

This amended bill is needed to keep the Soldiers, Sailor, Marine Fund's administration and control under the State's purview.

The privatization of this fund would allow an outside entity to determine eligibility for a program that has been successfully administered by state employees for decades and there is no rational reason to allow the transfer to the American Legion.

My members will lose their jobs, and the veterans will lose the professionalism and continuity of services that the current state employees provide.

Thank You,