

Testimony to Legislative Program Review and Investigative Committee

I want to thank this Committee for having this session here with us tonight and appreciate this time to discuss Raised Bill 6855.

First, Item Number 8 line 65 in this raised bill states:

(8) To provide, not later than January 1, 2016, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing within the Veterans' Home.

I do not believe this is possible from my understanding of what Permanent Supportive Housing is supposed to be. Under this if someone was moved to another wing here to put together the all the Veterans whom wish to stay permanently in one area they would still have the same living conditions but would be required to pay 1/3 of their income for still living in a 12 man room.

I would like to see some leeway on this to give our new Commissioner a chance to succeed in implementing this. While I would love to see Permanent Supportive housing available by January 1st for all Veterans just saying this must be done will not make it so.

Under Section 2 Line E basically all Veterans jobs are done away with and will be re-created either as State Union jobs or Workforce Readiness jobs. This is causing a great deal of stress for the Veterans here whom have these jobs as their only source of income.

Staff has told some Veterans that they will be fired as of July first because their job is not essential. Just today this was told to a Veteran whom washes dishes here. I don't know about anyone else but I cannot see how you could possibly run a chow hall without clean pots, pans and dishes. So how could this be a non-essential position to begin with?

I would hope that someone on this panel would take a few minutes to put the Veterans minds at rest and explain your proposal to close the present jobs and re-create them as State jobs and/or Workforce Readiness jobs so they can have some

peace of mind that they will still have an income of some kind even after these changes take place.

Under your Proposed Recommendations There many good things but I believe some tweaking will be necessary and hope that again the new Commissioner will be given some leeway to implement these things after hearing from Veterans here and others allowing him to follow the intent while leaving him room to improve upon these recommendations.

Finally, I have to thank this Committee for hearing our cries for help and responding in such an overwhelmingly positive way that has given many here and myself hope as to the future of the Veterans Home. I would also just like to say that our new Commissioner has given me even greater hope that not only that the physical aspects of the buildings and programs will be implemented in a professional way but that fairness will become a way of life here, for fairness has sorely been absent for many years here.

It is my sincere hope that I will be able to help him as he works through this morass to straighten it and help him find common sense solutions too many of the problems he faces in his new position.

Thank You for Your Time and Attention,

Ronald Coveney

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