



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

MILITARY DEPARTMENT  
WILLIAM A. O'NEILL ARMORY  
360 BROAD STREET  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105-3795

February 23, 2016

Honorable Mae Flexer, State Senator  
Honorable John "Jack" F. Hennessy, State Representative  
Co-Chairs, Veterans' Affairs Committee  
Hartford, CT 06106

## **IN RE Proposed Bills:**

**SB 21, "AAC Military Department's Nondiscrimination Laws"**

**SB 204, "AAE Simultaneous Membership in Multiple Units of State Military"**

**SB 207, "AAC Award of the Medal of Achievement"**

**HB 5358, "AAC Leasing of Military Facilities"**

**HB 5359, "AAC State Military Construction Projects"**

**HB 5360, "AAC the Military Department"**

I write to express the Military Department's support for the above-noted bills.

**S.B. 21** revises Section 27-59 of the general statutes to ensure that Connecticut citizens may serve in the armed forces of the state without discrimination based on religion, national origin, color, race, sex, gender identity or expression or sexual orientation. This legislation aligns the state law concerning nondiscrimination in Connecticut's armed forces with federal law and policies of the United States armed forces. This legislation makes important revisions to the state statute at a time when we are seeing major shifts in policy at the national level. The privilege to serve in the armed forces is an important aspect of citizenship, which should not be denied based on archaic discriminatory rationales. Enactment of this bill will be an important step in the fight against discrimination.

**SB 204** repeals Section 27-56 of the general statutes to eliminate a provision of state law that conflicts with federal law (32 USC 109 (e)). The federal law prohibits simultaneous membership in a unit of the United States Reserve, which includes the National Guard, and in a unit of a state defense force, such as the Governor's Guards. The statute also creates a conflict with state strength accountability, where a member who is in two units may be counted twice in the calculation of the strength of Connecticut's armed forces. Additionally, it potentially conflicts with other provisions of law, including section 27-20, which charges the Adjutant General with the duty of recruiting and managing the state's armed forces. I ask for the repeal of section.

**SB 207** revises Section 27-73g of the general statutes to expand the eligibility for the award of the Connecticut medal of achievement. This revision will permit members of the armed forces of the United States and members of all state armed forces, including members of the Governor's Guards, to receive the medal for outstanding achievement or meritorious service during the performance of state military service. This expansion permits Connecticut the opportunity to recognize the service of not only the members of our own armed forces but the members of all armed forces for state military service.

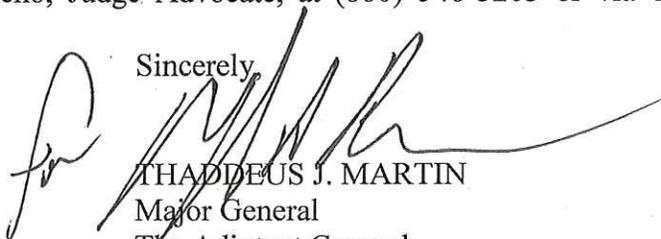
**HB 5358** revises section 27-39 of the general statutes to authorize the Adjutant General to lease state-owned Horse Guard facilities located in Avon and Newtown to any qualified lessee. The funds generated from the lease of the Horse Guard facilities will be fenced, directly deposited into the Governor's Guards horse account. This account, as provided for under section 27-19e of the general statutes, is established for the statutory purpose of offsetting the costs of maintaining Governor's Guards horses. This bill will provide the Military Department the ability to generate funds for the continued existence of the Governor's Horse Guards, potentially as a self-funding state militia unit. The bill also revises provisions of the statute to eliminate obsolete provisions

**HB 5359** revises sections 4b-51, 4b-52 and 4b-91 of the general statutes to increase the statutory limitation on Connecticut Military Department construction contracting from \$500,000 to \$2,000,000. Increasing the statutory amount will provide the Military Department more flexibility to execute military construction using our state contracting office. The Military Department has a proven record of executing construction projects using both state and federal resources. Please refer to our biennial "Armory Construction Purchase Program Report," enclosed. The Military Department executes military construction projects under federal auspices, through our United States Purchasing and Fiscal Office, and under state auspices, using the Military Department's contracting office (for state projects under \$500k) and the Department of Construction Services (for state projects exceeding \$500k). If enacted, the Military Department will have greater flexibility to execute in-house military construction projects and an increased ability to leverage federal construction dollars for the benefit of Connecticut.

**HB 5360** revises section 27-19 of the general statutes to ensure that the future military leader of the state armed forces possesses the necessary state military experience to successfully serve as the Adjutant General. The Adjutant General serves as the Governor's primary advisor on matters concerning Connecticut armed forces. To successfully advise the Governor and to serve the interests of the State of Connecticut, the Adjutant General must have significant service within the National Guard. Service in the National Guard is unlike any other branch or component of the armed forces, as it requires members to serve in a dual-status, in both the state and federal armed forces. It is the only component for which the state governor is the commander in chief. This bill will ensure that the Adjutant General, when appointed, has the necessary experience to successfully serve and advise the Governor.

On behalf of Connecticut's nearly 5,000 citizen soldiers and airmen, the members of our states armed forces, their families and our veterans, I ask the Veterans' Affairs Committee to take favorable action on these bills and to work for the passage of laws that provide meaningful opportunities and protections for our service members and veterans. Should you desire to discuss these matters or others concerning military/veteran legislation and legislation for the efficient operation of the Connecticut Military Department, please contact my legislative liaison, Lieutenant Colonel Timothy J. Tomcho, Judge Advocate, at (860) 548-3203 or via email at [timothy.j.tomcho.mil@mail.mil](mailto:timothy.j.tomcho.mil@mail.mil).

Sincerely,



THADDEUS J. MARTIN  
Major General  
The Adjutant General