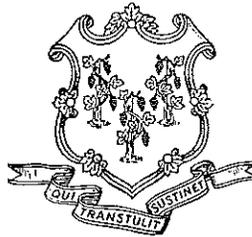


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**State of Connecticut**

**SENATE**

*Twenty-seventh District*

*Chair*  
General Bonding Subcommittee  
General Law Committee  
*Vice Chair*  
Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee  
Transportation Committee

Testimony of State Senator Carlo Leone on  
SB 199 An Act Concerning the Observance of Veterans' Day

Chairs Senator Flexer, Representative Hennessey, ranking members Senator Martin, Representative Yaccorino and honorable members of the committee, my name is Senator Carlo Leone and I am testifying today in support of SB 199 An Act Concerning the Observance of Veterans' Day.

As I am sure you know, we in Connecticut currently celebrate Veterans Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>, as a holiday. However, in recent years, including this past year, it seems that celebrating Veterans Day is better suited to using it as a school day for educational purposes, couched in the perspective of teaching the children the importance of Veterans Day, rather than as officially intended.

It has been argued that "everyone" views it as a day off from work or to go shopping for sales, and that the message and purpose has been lost.

I can assure you that is the furthest from the fact. Veterans Day has never been lost.

It was and still is regarded as a day of remembrance for all who have served their country valiantly during the first great world war, the war to end all wars (which sadly it did not) on the eleventh month of the eleventh day at the eleventh hour in honor of when hostilities ended in 1918, officially ending the war. It was first called Armistice Day but in 1954 has since been known as Veterans Day.

This monumental importance of pausing to reflect and honor our Veterans is and has been recognized by the Federal government as a national holiday. Sadly however, for reasons unknown they left an opening for States to choose whether to recognize this as a holiday. But if it is good enough for the US federal government, how is it that it is not good enough for Connecticut?

This has given educational professionals an opening into utilizing Veterans Day as a day to fulfill their educational duties to teach to the children, since their other pressures, such as professional development, snow days, etc. has created barriers to fulfilling their required amount of school days. Rather than increase the school year or add days at the beginning or end of the

school year, for some reason utilizing Veterans Day has become a preferred choice for some school districts.

The shopping argument falls flat, that people don't observe they shop. Choose any other holiday- should we cancel those because there is a sale and then teach the importance of that holiday in school. Presidents Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, religious observances, and the list goes on.

I know each and every Veterans Day I march in our Veterans Day Parade. I pause, reflect and honor my fellow veterans, just as the hundreds or thousands across the country who line the streets come out to do the same.

Teaching about the Veterans during that day for children to truly learn is not persuasive either in my opinion. There are countless other important military dates during the school year where the same importance and veteran experiences can be taught highlighting Veteran sacrifices that do not require solely Veterans Day as the one all and be all to learn these facts.

Schools alone are not the only way or reason to inform children on Veterans importance. Parents, community, and other veterans - all have a part and responsibility to teach our children.

If we allow this at one district, then quite simply it will occur at other districts and municipalities and eventually, all. As a veteran, and for countless other veterans who find this unappealing, unpatriotic, and unnerving, it has become an outrage for those who served and sacrificed their time that affected their lives, their friends, their families; and in some cases come home bearing the scars and wounds of war, seen and unseen, to this day.

Those who have been fortunate to come home will tell you that all those who never came home are remembered. It is for them and the countless other veterans who came home to become the voice of the fallen and to never forget their sacrifices. We celebrate Veterans for all they have done and for what they continue to do. They are our neighbors, friends, family. They are business people, doctors, lawyers, salespeople, retirees and yes teachers and legislators.

So let us not forget their service to country and liberty, their achievements, their importance to the very fabric of the United States. Let us remember just as it was officially intended. The observance of Veterans Day is and should remain a holiday, and not a school day, work day, or any other day that minimizes the memory of those who fought for the freedoms we all hold dear.