



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

THEMIS KLARIDES
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill Number 202
Veterans' Affairs Committee
February 23, 2016

Chairmen Flexer and Hennessy, Ranking Members Martin and Yaccarino, and Members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for raising **Senate Bill Number 202: An Act Concerning Veterans' Property Taxes**. I testify today both to support this bill as well as suggest additional language to assist disabled veterans by increasing the property tax exemption afforded to them on their homes and motor vehicles.

I wholeheartedly support efforts to provide tax relief to our veterans. In particular, we must focus on the needs of those who survive on low incomes and/or are disabled. This bill, as written, offers a reasonable approach to help men and women who have served by allowing municipalities to relieve some of the tax burden placed upon them if their income falls below the amount set forth in statute. In addition, I encourage the committee to add language amending Section 12-81 of the General Statutes to increase the exemption for veterans assigned a disability rating by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

I strongly urge this committee to pass Senate Bill Number 202 so as to provide much needed relief to our veterans. I have heard from innumerable constituents who feel our state needs to do more to mitigate the tax burden placed on these men and women. If we include both the current language as well as an increased exemption for disabled veterans, we will be making a tremendous stride towards protecting the most vulnerable. We must always be mindful of what these brave men and women have so selflessly given our country. Providing property tax relief is a small but effective way to improve their lives. Indeed, it is the least we can do. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to vote on this issue and hopefully pass legislation to provide the relief our veterans deserve.

Once again, thank you for raising this bill and for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Themis Klarides".

Themis Klarides