



Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Veterans' Affairs Committee
Hartford, CT
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Testifying on SB 262

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT & ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY SERVICE

Good afternoon Senator Flexer, Representative Hennessy, Senator Martin, Representative Yaccarino and members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

Thank you for allowing CBIA to testify on SB 262.

CBIA is a strong supporter of our military service men and women, as well as their families.

SB 262 seeks to add the federal family and medical leave act definition of "qualifying exigency" military leave to the list of events that qualifying an individual for Connecticut family and medical leave.

As you well know, a Connecticut business is subject to federal FMLA laws if it has 50 or more employees, and is additionally subject to Connecticut's FMLA law if they have 75 or more employees.

The family members of deployed veterans working at a business with 50 or more employees are already entitled to 12 weeks of leave under federal FMLA law. Despite many people's belief to the contrary, accommodating individuals out of the workplace on FMLA is an expensive proposition for businesses. We are unaware that the four weeks of additional FMLA leave this bill seeks to provide has ever been an issue in a Connecticut workplace. In the rare event an employee (especially a good employee) needed additional weeks of leave as a result of a deployed family member; I imagine the employer would consider accommodating the employee regardless of the law.

Given our state's current economic climate and absent a significant number of circumstances requiring this expansion of Connecticut's FMLA law, I would urge the committee to consider whether SB 262 is necessary at this time.