

University of Connecticut  
Veteran Student Organization (VSO)

Rm 224 Student Union "The Oasis"  
337 Mansfield Road, Unit 1264  
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March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

Good afternoon, Senator Mae Flexer, Representative Jack Hennessey, ranking members, and esteemed members of the Veteran's Affairs Committee

My name is Joseph Fusco. I am a U.S. Navy veteran, a senior at the University of Connecticut, and a member of the UCONN Veteran Student Organization. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to address you here today.

I am here to voice my support for Senate Bill 287

The bill in question would provide student veterans across the state with a greater opportunity to get there undergraduate degree in a timely manner. Student veterans face a set of circumstances that are unique to the rest of the student body. We have to deal with issues that include full or part-time jobs, household necessities, and spouses and children.

Unfortunately, college is generally tailored to on-campus students without dependents or outside responsibilities. Older students like us are at a serious disadvantage in this area and we require a more flexible schedule. This option is provided through summer and winter courses, which allow us to spread our schedules out so we have more time to fulfill our other duties. Unfortunately such a luxury can be an expensive burden for a student with dependents. These classes take up half a day and tuition costs over a thousand dollars per class for undergraduates.

I have been blessed to attend the University of Connecticut, who already waive the cost of summer and winter tuition for veterans. The timing of my last military deployment forced me to delay enrolling in college. In order to graduate on time (which is a necessity for those of us applying to graduate school), I had to take those inter-session classes. The Combat Veteran's Tuition Waiver granted me that opportunity, and I can now graduate this May. This is a

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wonderful program that allows veterans to adjust their schedules as they need to, without an undue burden of costs. Veterans are more in need of these classes than most other students and it is often their military service that makes this so. Therefore, I am recommending to the committee that Senate Bill 287 be approved for voting and passed by the State Legislature.

I thank you for your time and am happy to respond to questions.

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