



Connecticut Veterans

Chamber of Commerce

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Written Testimony of Michael J. Zacchea

Connecticut Veterans Chamber of Commerce

In support of House Bill 5246, An Act Redefining “Small Contractor” for Purposes of the Set-Aside Program for Small Contractors

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Government Administration and Elections Committee

The Connecticut Veterans Chamber of Commerce is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association that represents veteran-owned businesses and military veterans seeking to reintegrate into civilian life. The Chamber brings the veteran and civilian communities together to promote economic growth and development and reduce barriers to business and workforce entry.

I am an appointee to the Small Business Administration Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs. Veterans Business contracting policy and law review is a major part of the Advisory Committee’s role.

The Chamber **supports** House Bill 5246, which redefines the term “small contractor” for purposes of the state’s set-aside program for small contractors, from a definition based on gross revenue to one using the federal standards adopted pursuant to the federal Small Business Act.

Small business activity is the lifeblood of the state’s economy. Some 70% of consumption, and 70% of jobs, occur in the “small” business economy. The small business economy is middle class economics.

Connecticut is home to approximately 220,000 veterans, 45% of whom are between the ages of 22 to 65. By 2021, approximately 1.25 million combat veterans will be leaving active service; approximately 1% of that number should return to our state. According to the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau Survey of Business Owners published in August 2015, Connecticut is home to more than 31,000 fully-owned Veteran-owned businesses, and more than 11,000 part-Veteran-owned businesses; of which, more than 12,000 are payroll employers, employing nearly 40,000 total employees. More than ninety percent of Connecticut Veteran-owned businesses would meet the definition proposed in House Bill 5246. Coupled with a 15% price preference in Senate Bill 2 for goods and services purchased by certain state agencies from veteran-owned micro businesses, House Bill 5246 would contribute significantly as an impetus and incentive to veterans starting businesses in Connecticut.

Our vision is to make Connecticut a peer leader among the states in creating solutions for veteran reintegration into our communities.

Please contact Andrew DiSilvestro Jr., Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Veterans Chamber of Commerce, for any questions or additional information, at (860) 874-5251.