



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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*Testimony by Representative Mitch Bolinsky
Before the Veterans' Committee on House Bill 5358
AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEASING OF MILITARY FACILITIES
February 23, 2016*

My thanks to the Honorable Co-Chairs, Senator Flexer and Representative Hennessy; Vice Chairs Senator Gomes and Representative Nicastro; Ranking Members Senator Martin and Representative Yaccarino; as well as the entire Veterans' Committee for your consideration today of HB 5358.

I stand in strong support of this bill which allows the leasing of excess facilities space at the Governor's Horse Guards in the towns of Avon and Newtown, the unit I represent, for the purposes of fundraising to support said Horse Guards units. These facilities are both exceptional and, presently, both contain high quality surplus stall, paddock, arena and field space due to reductions in overall herd sizes over time.

Through the past six years of state budgets, the historic, majestic First & Second Company Governor's Horse Guards have faced uncertain fiscal times, needing to be saved from defunding in the very last minutes of 2015's, 2013's and 2011's biennial state budget processes.

HB 5358 represents a unique opportunity and is truly revolutionary because, as shown by financial analysis, the passing of this bill will permit these special facilities to become financially self-sustaining and vibrant assets that will actually contribute new revenue back to the State of Connecticut. At the same time, the bill is written to assure these proud facilities will remain primarily dedicated to their intended military purpose and operated with the dignity they have always demonstrated.

I tip my hat to the forward thinking of the Adjutant General, his command staff and the Horse Guard Commandants for advancing this exciting business model. As State Representative for Newtown's Second Company Horse Guard, I'd also like to acknowledge the efforts of recently retired Major Gordon Johnson for his outside-the-box contributions to this creative notion.

Finally, in Section 1, Paragraph (e), the true intention of this bill is clearly defined, stating "Proceeds from the lease of such military facilities in Avon and Newtown shall be paid to the Adjutant General, who shall promptly transmit such proceeds to the State Treasurer for deposit in the Governor's Guards horse account established under section 27-19e." This sustainable statement of purpose will allow the Horse Guard Units to become immune to future budget axes and proudly march into perpetuity.

In conclusion, "Good bill, ought to pass!" comes to mind.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have questions, please contact my office, anytime.

Respectfully,

Representative Mitch Bolinsky