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February 12, 2019

The Honorable Bob Duff
The Honorable Edwin Vargas
Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 1000
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Nomination of Thomas J. Saadi as Commissioner of Veteran Affairs

Senator Duff and Representative Vargas:

My name is James Noonan. I reside at 9 Heritage Hill Road, Norwalk, CT. I write to provide testimony in support of the confirmation of Thomas J. Saadi for Commissioner of Veterans Affairs.

I have known Commissioner Saadi for over 20 years in a multitude of capacities: fellow law school students, practicing attorneys and colleagues, soldiers and friends. As a Veteran who served as a commissioned officer for over 16 years in the United States Army Reserve, I know of no better lawyer, advocate, soldier and most importantly person, to fill this esteemed and critical position.

Mr. Saadi is an incredibly intelligent, hard-working, conscientious, organized, and dedicated individual with an abundance of passion for service to our state and country and those that have served. He has a drive for excellence in every facet of his life. I had the pleasure of working with Tom at the 4th Legal Support Organization, US Army Reserve, from 2005 – 2010. He was a

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newly commissioned officer in the army but his ability to integrate himself in to the army culture and learn and educate fellow soldiers was at a level much more senior to his rank and experience. This was largely attributed to not only his intellect and appetite for knowledge but more importantly his ability to work with individuals and groups across a spectrum of ages, backgrounds, ranks and experience. He was not only an issue spotter but a problem solver and a team builder. He quickly became one of the "go to" junior officers in the unit and that reliability and confidence has continued to his other military units and commands as well as in his professional life.

I have witnessed Commissioner Saadi's care and compassion for his fellow citizens and soldiers and his forward thinking. Not only during his military service but equally during his 20 years on the Danbury City Council, his time in the Attorney General's office and most recently over the last several years at the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs he has dedicated himself to issues and causes that impact the quality of life of his constituents. While at the Attorney General's Office he served on working groups focused on prescription drug and dietary supplement fraud and worked closely with the Consumer Protection Department. During his tenure in the Department of Veterans Affairs he secured an increase in federal funding for expansion and improvements to the State Veterans Cemetery. He also worked to modernize the Department healthcare center by transitioning the center to a skilled nursing facility to better meet the needs of our state veterans. In addition, he expanded the Department partnerships with other state and community-based organizations to provide better programs and support for veterans.

For far too many years, our veteran population has dealt with institutional challenges when seeking help for their personal issues: problems with the adequacy of healthcare; poor and often dysfunctional record keeping; funding issues; or inadequate community programs to meet the needs of this incredible group of servicemen and women. The issues our veterans face now are wide ranging and ever-changing as a new generation of veterans continue to expand on a yearly basis. They continue to face difficulty due to age, infirmity, onset of new medical issues, psychological or societal problems. There needs to be a higher level of focus and attention not only on these issues but on solutions to the problems our veterans encounter, both institutionally and personally. Our veterans deserve a positive VA experience that affords them an opportunity for an enhanced quality of life and offers solutions to the myriad of problems they will face. Commissioner Saadi's training and experience in both his civilian and military capacity make him the ideal candidate to lead the organization that will focus on solving these problems and offers our veterans the best chance of a successful experience.

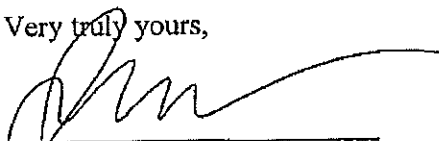
The Army core values are Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage. Commissioner Saadi possessed these values long before he joined the Army and before he became the Commissioner. But it is his living of these core values that make him such an exemplary public servant and the best person possible to lead this Department. Confirm Commissioner Saadi and allow him to continue his work on behalf of our veterans, to continue to strive for excellence within the Department and enhance the quality of care for those he serves. Commissioner Saadi is fully dedicated to his constituency and will work tirelessly on their behalf. Veterans deserve our gratitude and support and confirming Commissioner Saadi is a

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positive action by our state leaders that will ensure the direction of the Department of Veterans Affairs continues to move forward in the future in the best interests of our veterans.

While I am unable to attend and give testimony in person, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Noonan', written over a horizontal line.

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