

PA10-105

HB5350

House	2970-2979	10
Senate	3541-3542, 3550-3552	5
Veterans	145-146, 147-148, 156, 165-167, 176, 177	10

H – 1082

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2010**

**VOL.53
PART 10
2967 – 3317**

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

4
May 1, 2010

Representatives Calendar for Saturday, May 1, 2010.

On page 5, Calendar 104, Substitute for House Bill Number 5350, AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION CREDITS FOR MILITARY TRAINING, favorable report of the Committee on General Law.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Vice chairman of the Veterans Committee, Representative Frank Nicastro, you have the floor, sir.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good morning, sir.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Mr. Speaker, I move for the acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Will you remark?

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

5
May 1, 2010

The Clerk has amendment LCO 4355. I would ask that the Clerk to please call the amendment that I may be granted leave to the chamber to summarize.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 4355 which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A"?

THE CLERK:

LCO number 4355 House "A" offered by Representative Graziani.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative seeks leave of the chamber to summarize. Any objection to summarization?

Hearing none, Representative Nicastro, you may proceed.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, basically, what we've done this amendment adds on to the original bill that -- the public higher education can grant these credits when they're in line with the American Council of Education. We wanted to make it very clear. We had met with the educational departments and they were very comfortable with this, Mr. Speaker. So I -- I request that -- that the amendment be approved.

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

6
May 1, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative, would you move adoption of the amendment?

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Adoption, Mr. Speaker, I meant to say "adoption."

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

The question is on adoption. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on the amendment? If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor of adoption of House Amendment Schedule "A" please signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Those opposed, nay. The ayes have it. The resolution is adopted.

Remark further on the bill as amended.

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. -- Mr. Speaker.

If I might a few questions to the proponent of

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

7
May 1, 2010

the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Good morning. In the case of the universities, the con -- community colleges, the CSU system, what was the reaction when this was -- when they came to testify on this particular proposal, through you, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Nicastro.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

They're -- they're all in favor of it. Thank you for the question. We sat down with them and met with them. They have no problem with it whatsoever.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And could please share what types of courses you would expect that they would apply for? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Nicastro.

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

8
May 1, 2010

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, basically, communications, electronics, the medical field -- it's a complete circle of -- of courses that could be given credit to.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The reason for my questioning and the answers -- thank you for your answers on that. Certainly, when we look at the government experiences that many of our veterans receive translate very well to some the -- many of the course -- type courses that they would have to take in order to meet a lot of their gen eds and sometimes -- general education courses -- and some -- a lot of the specific courses in, perhaps, a major, certainly the entry level ones and what this does is give them the ability to apply for those.

The experience that my family has had was that when my husband had served in the military for seven years, gone through OCS, became a helicopter pilot

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9
May 1, 2010

and then went back to take courses to get a bachelor's degree at the University of Rhode Island. Thirty credits were accepted by the University, 30 credits. And that is -- was an equivalent of almost -- it was a year for him as he went back to college. Mostly, it was for the -- the basic general education units that he was going to have to acquire, and it allowed him to get right into his major because a lot of the prerequisites were considered to have been met.

So I am very in support of this, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the work the Veterans Committee has done on this, as well as meeting with all of the university and college systems in our state because I think it -- there's a couple things. One is that it honors the veterans for their education that they have acquired through the military. But it also is a way to save them money. And it also saves us money in the long run. If you think about the GI bill, those types of things that we do support as a government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the gentlemen for all their work on this particular bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10
May 1, 2010

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the United States armed forces have some of the best schools in the world. And militaries from around the world send their soldiers to America so they can take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to get educated in trades and all the other careers that the United States military offers.

I know in my specific example I spent eight years in a trade relating to avionics and aviation. And when you complete that trade and -- and then actually as you progress through your career with real hands-on experience and thousands of hours in a classroom, when you get out, up until now, you couldn't use this training and this education to get -- to move forward with your apprenticeship and other things.

So this is an important bill. This empowers our soldiers who have real world experience, a real world education, to basically move ahead and progress in their career and really start out, once

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11
May 1, 2010

they leave that military career, in the civilian career at the same level.

So I urge support of my colleagues. And thank you, Veterans Affairs Committee, for this important issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Graziani.

REP. GRAZIANI (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Member of the chambers, I just really want to thank the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut State University system and our community colleges.

They're all for this. And what this bill does, as was outlined so eloquently by previous speakers, is give our men and women the opportunity, not only for their MOS, their Military Occupation Specialty, doing their job day in day out but a lot of them can sign up for courses online.

At each branch of the service I have a copy of a transcript from my intern, Jared Luce, who's a Iraq veteran. It truly gives him the opportunity to better themselves and go into the university system

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

12
May 1, 2010

and obtain that all important degree as we know.

So I want to thank everybody for making this possible and I'd particularly like to thank my vice chair, my ranking members, and the whole committee, as well, for moving this bill forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Would you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Would you care to remark further? If not, will staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by a roll call. Members to the chamber. The House is voting by a roll call. Members to the chamber please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted. Please check the roll call board. Make sure your votes were properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will please take a tally.

ckd/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

13
May 1, 2010

Will the Clerk please announce the tally?

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5350 as amended by House "A."

Total Number Voting 125

Necessary for Passage 63

Those voting Yea 125

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 26

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill, as amended, is passed.

Are there any announcements or introductions?

Any announcements or introductions?

Rep -- Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Up in the gallery today is a Girl Scout troop from the Norwich area and one of the leaders happens to be Diane Deutsch who actually took economics with me, the poor thing. And I just would like the House to welcome these girls who are experts in the environment. That's what they're doing their projects on. They're experts in recycling, et cetera. So if we could give a warm welcome to the Girl Scouts in the gallery and a wave.

S - 608

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2010**

**VOL. 53
PART 11
3251 - 3554**

jp/mb/gbr
SENATE

355
May 4, 2010

Calendar 492, Substitute for House Bill Number 5446.

Mr. President, move to place this item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Continuing on calendar page 15, Calendar 494, House Bill Number 5315. Mr. President, move to place this item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, moving to calendar page 21 -- top of calendar page 21, Mr. President, Calendar 534, Substitute for House Bill Number 5543. Mr. President, I move to place this item on the content calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Bottom of calendar page 21, Mr. President, the last item, Calendar 539, Substitute for House Bill Number 5350. Mr. President,

I move to place that item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, moving now to calendar page 36,
Calendar 374, Substitute for House Bill Number 5225.

Mr. President, I move to place this item on the
consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President. Moving to
calendar page 37, Calendar 415, House Bill Number
5131. Mr. President, I move to place this item on the
consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President, and Mr. President, on
calendar page 38, Calendar 454, House Bill Number
5526. Mr. President, move to place that item on the
consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Bill 121; calendar page 7, Calendar 377, Substitute for House Bill 5291; Calendar page 8, Calendar 398, Substitute for Senate Bill 231; calendar page 9, Calendar 442, Substitute for House Bill 5141; calendar page 10, Calendar 449, House Bill 5495; calendar page 11, Calendar 451, Substitute for House Bill 5535; Calendar 465, Substitute for House Bill 44 -- 5448; calendar page 12, Calendar 466, Substitute for House Bill 5289; Calendar 473, Substitute for House Bill 5059; Calendar 476, Substitute for House Bill 5117; calendar page 13. Calendar 478, House Bill 5290; Calendar 481, Substitute for House Bill 5119; Calendar 482, Substitute for House Bill 5120; calendar page 15, Calendar 492, Substitute for House Bill 5446; Calendar 494, House Bill 5315; Calendar 504, Substitute for House Bill 5306; calendar page 20, Calendar 532, Substitute for House Bill 5033; calendar page 21, Calendar 534, Substitute for House Bill 5543; Calendar 539, Substitute for House Bill 5350; calendar page 25, Calendar 561, Substitute for House Bill 5419; calendar page 36, Calendar 374, Substitute for House Bill 5225; calendar page 37, Calendar 415, House Bill 5131; calendar page 38, Calendar 454, Substitute for House Bill 5526.

Mr. President, that completes the items placed on Consent Calendar Number 2.

THE CHAIR:

Please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll on the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Senate is voting by roll on the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted, please check your vote. The machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is adoption of Consent Calendar Number 2.

Total number voting

35

Necessary for Adoption 18

Those voting Yea 35

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 1

THE CHAIR:

Consent calendar Number 2 passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would move that any items on the consent calendar requires additional action by the House of Representatives be immediately transmitted to that chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And also any other items acted upon today, not on the consent calendar requiring action by the House of Representatives. Also would move that those items be immediately transmitted.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, sir, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would yield to any members seeking recognition for announcements or points of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

At this time, I will entertain any points of

**JOINT STANDING
COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

1 – 181

2010

done three tours, Iraq, Afghanistan. I was fortunate enough to get a good welcome home, and I thank all the Vietnam veterans and everyone else for giving me that, because if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't have received that.

Back to the bill. We're not asking for anything. We just want -- we want the opportunity. The -- there's -- there's set-asides for minorities. Minorities that just came to our country. They didn't put their life on the line for their country. They're not dealing with problems, but they're getting opportunities that we're not. And I just, personally, I don't feel it's right. So I -- I just, I wanted to -- to say how I feel.

And then, if I can just go off. The TBI, I've lost friends from roadside bombs. TBI itself, when they got back home years later. And it sucked. We need committees to take care of all of that stuff. I -- I can't talk.

Sorry.

REP. GRAZIANI: David, you did fine, buddy. You did fine. And thank you again for your service. Remember, you're surrounded by good people.

Any questions?

If not, I think that concludes. Whoa, I see one more here. At the very bottom. Debbie Newton.

DEBBIE NEWTON: Good morning, Representative Graziani and members of the Select Committee on Veteran's Affairs. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of several important proposals before you today.

SB 313 SB 314
HB 5353
HB 5388
HB 5350
HB 5352

My name is Debbie Newton and I am the Legislative Chair for the National Guard Association of Connecticut. I have served in that capacity for seven years and am a 30-year member of the Connecticut Army National Guard.

Let me briefly touch on a couple of bills before you, then I will discuss more fully two specific bills.

Raised Bill 313, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCEPTABILITY OF CERTAIN CLAIMS FOR THE VETERAN'S PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION is a bill that is needed. Many veterans over the age of 70, my mother among them, lost their Military Discharge Papers in the 1974 fire that destroyed the storage facility holding all those -- those all-important documents. Without them, many veterans are forced to either do without benefits they are entitled to or to jump through hoops to try and prove they are indeed eligible for them. This loss of records was through no fault of their own and they should not have to suffer the consequences of an event that was far outside of their control.

Raised Bill 314, AN ACT CONCERNING MILITARY OR VETERAN STATUS ON STATE-ISSUED FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS will assist in the collection of data and inform our state's veterans of all their benefits and entitlements.

Yesterday, a friend of mine, a former member of the U.S. Naval Reserve, was in Newington to fight for educational benefits he had been told somewhere along the line he was not eligible for. Not only did he find out he was eligible to have his master's degree paid for, but the VA is going back and reburse -- reimbursing him for all his eligible expenses for his

bachelor's degree, and he found he may be eligible for an increase in his disability from 10 percent to 70 percent.

Imagine how much stress this man would have avoided while going through school if he were not worried about paying his bills and taking care of his kids. 314 will help others avoid this situation. And as veterans move into the state, it gives us a way to identify those veterans, so that we can tell them what their benefits are.

Raised Bill 5353, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY and Raised Bill 5388, AN ACT CONCERNING HOMELESS FEMALE VETERANS are very much needed in light of the past several years.

Both groups of veterans and service members are growing daily and their needs are not being fully met. It is not because of the lack of caring or the lack of a desire to help, it is because of the overwhelming numbers and the fact that we may not have been prepared to provide the care and att these heroes need. The Task Force and Study these bills establish could go a long way in helping us understand and provide assistance to our veterans and service members in need.

NGACT fully supports Raised Bill 5350, AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION CREDITS FOR MILITARY TRAINING, and has proposed this bill for the past two years.

Last year we took a step in the right direction with passage of the CDL bill giving credit for CDL training and licensure in the military for civilian CDLs. This bill continues that common sense application.

Many of our service members go to military schools to become plumbers, electricians, carpenters, mechanics, diesel mechanics, aircraft mechanics and spend months doing nothing but learning their chosen crafts or professions, with some training lasting more than year. When they complete their training, they are deemed as professionals by the United States Government and are sent around the country and the world to practice their specialties.

But when they return to a National Guard or Reserve Unit or come home after completing an active duty tour, they are told that what they have learned, what they have been doing, doesn't count and they have to go to tech schools, they have to become apprentices, they have to pay to take training that our tax dollars have already paid for them to have.

What this bill does is give credit for that training towards licensure and certification in the State of Connecticut. It does not alleviate the need for these service members to take any state-specific courses that deal with such topics as state building codes, nor does it alleviate continuing education, nor does it negate the need to pay for licensing or certification fees.

What it does do is give credit for training and schooling already completed through the military and has the potential to put many people into the employable workforce much quicker than they might otherwise be. NGACTION urges your full support of this bill.

Finally, I want to speak to Raised Bill 5352,
AN ACT PROCLAIMING MARCH THIRTIETH TO BE

Thank you very much, Debbie.

Now has there -- anyone that would like to speak that has not signed up? This is your opportunity.

If not, just for the record, we do have written testimony to read into the record. No, just from, who the agency is. I'm not going through the whole thing. That's why she's good over here. To give me a little elbow every now and then.

We have two letters from the Department of Administrative Services on position on the Set-Aside Program for Veterans that own small businesses. They also submitted written testimony regarding AN ACT CONCERNING MILITARY OR VETERAN'S STATUS ON STATE-ISSUED FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS.

SB314

We also have written testimony from the Connecticut Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Heating and Cooling Contractors Association. And they are testifying on 5350.

And the last one, we have a brief letter from the Department of Public Health regarding House Bill 5350, AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSES AND CERTIFICATION CREDITS FOR MILITARY TRAINING, which, in fact, they support.

Yes, Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just wanted to ask the Chairman's indulgence. There was a forum held last evening at Housatonic Community College concerning

HB5388



**TESTIMONY OF
JENN JENNINGS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PLUMBING, HEATING & COOLING CONTRACTORS OF CONNECTICUT (CT-PHCC)
AND
CONNECTICUT HEATING & COOLING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION (CHCC)
BEFORE THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MARCH 2, 2010**

The Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Contractors of Connecticut (CT-PHCC) and the Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association (CHCC) submits the following joint comments regarding HB-5350, An Act Concerning Licensure And Certification Credits For Military Training:

Members of the plumbing, heating and cooling industry applaud all current members of the military and veterans alike for their service to our country, and CT-PHCC and CHCC stand as willing partners to help promote careers in the occupational trades for members of the military and veterans. While CT-PHCC and CHCC supports the intent behind this legislation, we would also caution against any legislation that attempts to create an across-the-board exemption or credit, however, as this could have wide-ranging impacts for both tradespersons and consumers alike. With regard to the relevancy of the training received, it is our understanding that for the purposes of occupational trades licensed by the Department of Consumer Protection, the various occupational licensing boards accept relevant military training in considering whether an individual is eligible to obtain a license. This is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

State law establishes a licensing system for several occupational trades overseen by the Examining Boards for the Electrical Work; Heating, Piping, and Cooling Work; Plumbing and Piping Work; Elevator Installation, Repair, and Maintenance Work; Automotive Glass Work and Flat Glass Work; and Fire Protection Sprinkler Systems Boards. Each trade has different levels of expertise—apprentice, journeyman, and

contractor. Workers must meet education, training, and experience requirements to qualify for each level. Some trades also include a mandatory continuing education requirement. Members of the plumbing and heating trades who hold unlimited licenses are qualified to perform any and all work related to their trade. The occupational licensing boards, which are comprised of both union and non-union contractors as well as the general public, also provide an important mechanism for ensuring the consistent and fair enforcement of the state's licensing laws. Because the boards provide balanced representation of the industry, license holders respect their decisions.

Far too many contractors do not maintain the proper licenses or qualifications, creating public safety concerns. In addition, individuals who have worked as apprentices but whose employers failed to properly register them, are unable to pursue licensing without repeating their apprenticeship hours. These laws must be vigorously enforced to protect consumers and employees. Strong enforcement of the state's licensing and apprenticeship laws relative to the plumbing, heating and cooling industry along with all licensed trades is paramount. Ensuring that individuals performing work are held to high standards helps maintain the highest possible level of safety, training and professionalism for our industry, just as it does in the military.

CT-PHCC and CHCC thanks all veterans for their service and thanks the Committee for its consideration of our comments.

CT-PHCC is a not-for-profit trade association that represents the professional plumbing, heating and cooling contractors in the state of Connecticut. CT-PHCC and its members are committed to protecting the health and safety of the public. Contractors who belong to the association have demonstrated reliability and trustworthiness and are licensed by the state of Connecticut.

CHCC is a trade association whose objectives are to strengthen and further trade relations, attract, educate and train necessary manpower, represent members at all levels of government and review and establish quality standards and procedures. The association represents over 125 Heating & Cooling Companies in Connecticut.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS'
AFFAIRS
March 1, 2010**

Leonard H. Guercia, Jr., Chief Operating Officer 860-509-8100

**House Bill 5350 - An Act Concerning Licensure and Certification Credits for
Military Training.**

The Department of Public Health supports House Bill 5350

There have been many instances where those serving in either active military duty or are in a non-active military capacity concurrently serve as emergency medical service care providers. However, these individuals, protecting the public in multiple capacities, have had great difficulty maintaining their Connecticut EMS license or certification. This is often due to the fact that current Connecticut law fails to recognize the training these men and women received during the course of their military service. Passage of this proposed legislation would allow Connecticut to gain and/or retain these qualified individuals in their continued service as EMS personnel. It is important to note that DPH has included this concept within an agency bill that has been raised in concept by the public health committee, but has not yet come out in Bill form.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

Phone:



Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191

410 Capitol Avenue - MS # _____

P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134

Affirmative Action / An Equal Opportunity Employer



National Guard Association of Connecticut

360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795
www.ngact.com ngact2005@yahoo.com (860) 247-5000

March 2, 2010

Testimony in Favor of Raised Bills 313, 314, 5350, 5352, 5353 and 5388

Good morning Sen. Maynard, Rep. Graziani and members of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs and thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of several important proposals before you today. My name is Debbi Newton and I am the Legislative Chair for the National Guard Association of Connecticut. I have served in that capacity for the past seven years and am a 30-year member of the Connecticut Army National Guard.

Let me briefing touch on a couple of the bills before you, then I will get discuss more fully two specific bills.

Raised Bill 313, ACC the Acceptability of Certain Claims for the Veterans' Property Tax Exemption is a bill that is sorely needed. Many Veterans over the age of 70, my mother among them, lost their Military Service Discharge Papers in a fire that destroyed the storage facility holding those all-important records. Without them, many Veterans are forced to either do without benefits they are entitled to, or to jump through hoops to try and prove they are indeed eligible for them. This loss of records was through no fault of their own and they should not have to suffer the consequences of an event that was far outside of their control.

Raised Bill 314: ACC Military or Veteran Status on State-Issued Forms and Publications will assist the Department of Veterans Affairs collect data and inform our state's Veterans of all of their benefits and entitlement. Yesterday a friend of mine, a former member of the US Naval Reserve, was in Newington to fight for educational benefits he had been told somewhere along the line he was not eligible for. Not only did he find out he was eligible to have his Masters' Degree paid for, but the VA is going back and reimbursing him for all his eligible expenses for his bachelor's degree, and he found he may be eligible for an increase in his disability from 10% to 70%. Imagine how much stress this man would have avoided while going through school if he were not worried about paying his bills. 314 will help others avoid this situation. By providing a check off box on state forms, you avoid the privacy issue associated with having the military provide the names and addresses of veterans getting out of the military, and as veterans move into the state, it enables us a way to identify them and provide them the information they need as well.

Raised Bill 5353: An Act Establishing a Task Force on Traumatic Brain Injury and Raised Bill 5388: ACC Homeless Female Veterans are very much needed in light of the past several years. Both groups of Veterans and Servicemembers are growing daily and their needs are not being fully met. It is not because of a lack of caring or the lack of desire to help, it is because of the overwhelming numbers and the fact that we were not prepared to provide the care and attention these heroes need. The Task Force and Study these bills establish could go a long way in helping us understand and provide assistance to our Veterans and Servicemembers in need.

NGACT fully supports **Raised Bill 5350: ACC Licensure and Certification Credits for Military Training**, and has proposed this bill for the past two years. Last year we took a step in the right direction with passage of the CDL bill giving credit for CDL training and licensure in the military for civilian CDLs. This bill continues that common sense application. Many of our Servicemembers go to military schools to become plumbers, electricians, carpenters, mechanics, diesel mechanics, aircraft mechanics, medical professionals and spend months doing nothing but learning their chosen crafts or professions, with some training lasting more than a year. When they complete their training, they are deemed as professionals by the United States Government and are sent around the country and the world to practice their specialties. But when they return to a National Guard or Reserve Unit or come home after completing an active duty tour, they are told that what they have learned, what they have been doing, doesn't count and they have to go to tech schools, they have to become apprentices, they have to pay to take training that our tax dollars already paid for them to have. What this bill does is give credit for that training towards licensure and certification in the State of Connecticut. It does not alleviate the need for these Servicemembers to take any state-specific courses that deal with such topics as state building codes, nor does it negate the need to pay any licensing or certification fees. What it does do is give credit for training/schooling already completed through the military and has the potential to put many people into the employable workforce much quicker than they might otherwise be. NGACT urges your full support of this bill.

Finally, I want to speak to **Raised Bill 5352: An Act Proclaiming March 30th to be Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day**. I am, quite frankly, embarrassed, and ashamed, to be speaking about this bill today. I have been in the military for 30 years. Thirty years. Let me say that one more time...30 years. The last Vietnam Veteran came home a few years before I enlisted in the military and we are just now talking about welcoming them home? I realize the people in this room are not necessarily responsible for this outrageous delay, and in fact, at least two of you on this committee are Vietnam Vets, and I want to thank you for your service, for helping preserve my right to wear the uniform of the United States Army.

As a young girl, I remember being in the car with my parents and two of my younger brothers heading to Little Neck Long Island to visit my aunt and uncle. It was late because we had to wait for my dad to get out of work so we could go. Suddenly, my dad pulled the car over to the side of the road and asked a young man where he was headed. That young man was a US Navy sailor and was walking home from the train station because he didn't have the money to go any further on the train or to get a bus ticket. He had been walking along the highway for an hour, carrying his duffle bag before my dad stopped. He told the Sailor to get in the car and drove him over an hour out of our way to get him home safely and it was after midnight when we stopped. I was brought up with that kind of example of how we treat our veterans, our troops. As a young child, I thought that's how everyone treated our military members.