

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 14-114

SB293

House	7074-7079	6
Senate	3373-3374, 3397	3
Veterans	206-222, 224-225	19
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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2014**

**VOL.57
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6912 – 7260**

Good evening, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry for the confusion. We're about to set up our third consent calendar for the evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that -- I would like to move the following items to the Consent Calendar, all of which are in concurrence with the Senate.

Senate Bill 293, House Calendar Number 539 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar Number 321; Calendar 486 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 542 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 540 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 507 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 411 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 472 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 314; Calendar 132 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 116 as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 541 as amended by Senate "A" and Senate "B".

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Aresimowicz, I believe that a couple of the bills that you called were actually Senate calendar numbers, not House calendar numbers. So I believe the Clerk knows what you're intending, he

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may -- with your indulgence, I was going to ask him
to, perhaps, offer the correction.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Mr. Speaker, maybe for clarification, I'll go
through the bill numbers very quickly.

It being Senate Bill 29 --

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Mr. Speaker -- excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Is this
the appropriate time for one to object to all the
items on the Consent Calendar?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

It would be.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

I will object to all the items on the Consent
Calendar. I would respectfully request that we talk.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

With that objection, we will suspend action on
the Consent Calendar so that the Minority and Majority
Leader may talk.

[Pause.]

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I -- just to clarify, I'm going to run through the bill number and the calendar number.

It would be Senate Bill 293, which is Calendar 545; Senate Bill 429, which is Calendar 539; Senate Bill 115, which is Calendar 321; Senate Bill 203, which is Calendar 486; Senate Bill 71, which is Calendar 542; Senate Bill 447, which is Calendar 540; Senate Bill 61, which is Calendar 507; Senate Bill 75, which is Calendar 411; Senate Bill 321, which is Calendar 472; Senate Bill 66, which is Calendar 314; Senate Bill 178, which is Calendar 495; Senate Bill 430, which is Calendar Number 489; and Senate Bill 425, which is Calendar 51 -- 541.

And I move adoption of the Consent Calendar.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Mr. Clerk, does that match your listing of the calendar numbers?

THE CLERK:

430, Mr. Majority Leader, Senate Bill 430 is calendar what?

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

489.

THE CLERK:

Yes. It does, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

And, Mr. Majority Leader, could you also indicate -- I'm sorry to have to delay this for a second, but according to my notes, all of those -- well, most of those are adopted -- or amended by Senate "A"? If you could just --

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Correct, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

specify --

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Except the first and the last, sir. The last one being Senate "A" and "B," sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you. As long as we're clear about the amendments that have been adopted in the Senate.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Correct, Mr. Speaker. And I move passage of the bills on today's Consent Calendar Number 3.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question before the Chamber is adoption of the Consent Calendar Number 3?

Staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House is voting on Consent Calendar Number 3.

The House is voting by roll. Will members please return to the chamber immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted?

Take your time, Representative Boukus.

Would members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Consent number -- Consent Calendar Number 3

Total Number Voting	147
Necessary for Passage	74
Those voting Yea	147
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	4

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The Consent Calendar is passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 506?

THE CLERK:

Calendar 506, on page 25, favorable report of the
joint standing committee on Appropriations. Senate

Bill 55, AN ACT CONCERNING COMPLAINTS THAT ALLEGED
MISCONDUCT BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY PERSONNEL.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

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

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Question's on acceptance of the joint committee's
favorable report and passage of the bill.

Will you remark, sir?

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Clerk has an amendment, LCO Number 4583. I'd
ask that it be called, and I be allowed to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 4583, which has
been previously designated Senate Amendment "A."

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If all members have voted, the machine will be closed
and the Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On Senate Bill Number 235.

Total number voting	36
Necessary for passage	19
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The bill as amended passes. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, would move
for immediate transmittal to the House of
Representatives of that item just acted upon.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And that was Calendar Page 32, Calendar 168, Senate
Bill 235.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I also have
an item to change a marking on.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

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Yes, Mr. President, it is an item on the Foot,
Calendar Page 42, Calendar 140, Senate Bill 293.

THE CHAIR:

Yes, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And, Mr. President, would move to place that item on
our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, if we would
call as the next items, we have Calendar Page 13,
Calendar 448, House Bill 5145.

Calendar Page 30, Calendar 591, House Bill 5537.

Also Calendar Page 23, Calendar 548, House Bill 5144.

And Calendar Page 24, Calendar 553, House Bill 5527.

And also Calendar Page 24, Calendar 555, House Bill
5389. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Page 13, Calendar 448, Substitute for House Bill
Number 5145 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
STATUTES. Favorable Report of the Committee on Public
Health.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

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And on Page 42, Calendar 140, Senate Bill Number 293.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you call for a Roll Call Vote and the machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate Roll Call on Consent Calendar Number 1 has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney. Senator Hartley. Senator Fasano. Senator Witkos. All members have voted? All members have voted? The machine is now closed. Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Consent Calendar Number 1.

Total number voting	36
Necessary for adoption	19
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar passed.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Madam President, would move that any items on that Consent Calendar or any other items adopted so far this evening still in the possession of the Clerk

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and then we can get help with the education.

COMMISSIONER LINDA SCHWARTZ: Well, I do appreciate the fact that you brought the committee here because I think it -- it speaks for itself and Senator Osten was very good. We've tried very hard with those steps, but it just doesn't seem to -- they're like potholes, they just keep falling apart.

SENATOR LEONE: Yes. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LINDA SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

SENATOR LEONE: Thank you, Commissioner.

REP. HENNESSY: I would just like to close with thanking you, Commissioner, for -- for your service to the state and the country. You've done a wonderful job. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LINDA SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

REP. HENNESSY: Is there anyone that -- that lives here that's here today that would like to come up and speak?

COMMISSIONER LINDA SCHWARTZ: No. I don't -- it's dinnertime.

REP. HENNESSY: Oh, okay.

John LeBlanc.

JOHN LEBLANC: Hi. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

SB293

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is John LeBlanc. I'm the state inspector of the Connecticut Veterans of Foreign Wars. Bob Frolick, our

state commander, had planned on addressing you today but is, unfortunately, still down in Washington on a national conference. So I'm here to represent him today.

The issue before us concerns changes to the state liquor regulations as it relates to guest book requirements. S.B. 293, which the Connecticut Veterans of Foreign Wars supports, is the bill being considered.

Three sections of Title 30, which are the state liquor regulations, relate to club members and guest book requirements. One defines members, and I'll paraphrase here without all of the legalese, as individuals who have a voice in the election of club officers and in the operation of the club. Guest book requirements specify that anyone not a member must be properly signed into the guest book.

These regulations are considered to require VFW members who are not members or who are not at their home post to be signed in as a guest; no different than anyone else. The current statutes look at our organization as 118 individual entities, all regulated under the same provisions. In one way, we are that, 118 individually chartered posts, each unique in its existence.

In many ways, though, and how we look at it, we are 118 members of one family, the Department of Connecticut. Looking back a moment at how the law defines a member, there's a lot of room for interpretation. S.B. 293 will clarify and standardize the issue. Some clubs take a narrow view and require any VFW member not of that post to sign in. Others take a broader view that any VFW member -- member has membership

privileges at any post. We believe, and would like S.B. 293 adopted in the broader view of membership.

Say, for example, I visit the post in Devon. My home post 201 in Waterbury. I may be required to sign in as a guest. Here's the catch, though. I'm a district officer elected in part by the Devon post. In that capacity, I have a voice in Devon post operations. I'm also a state officer and as such I have a voice in the operation of all posts throughout the state. Therefore, I have input and influence on the operation of posts that are not my home post.

Each and every member within the state actually has, through their VFW membership, a voice in club operations at these three different levels; at their post directly, at district level, and at state level. All have the right to run for office at all levels.

With this in mind every member can be deemed to qualify at any post as a regular member regardless of post affiliation.

All right. Thank you for your consideration on this issue. I hope I didn't go over my time limit, and please pass S.B. 293.

Do you have any questions of me?

REP. HENNESSY: Thank you, John.

JOHN LEBLANC: Thank you and if I may --

REP. HENNESSY: Is there any questions?

JOHN LEBLANC: Yes, sir.

REP. ADINOLFI: Yeah, it's on.

Question, if I know there's down in Hamden and a few other towns there's VFW posts that have a restaurant and a bar. And can't a member of the American Legion or a DAV or any of the other veterans organization go there for lunch also?

JOHN LEBLANC: Yes, of course, they -- they can. We are open to guests. We're allowed to bring guests into our canteens as long as they're signed in as a guest by a regular member. So, yes, of course, they are welcome.

REP. ADINOLFI: Thank you.

REP. HENNESSY: Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to ask two lines of questioning so -- in -- in regard to this bill. And the first one is just sticking with the VFW in your situation. So right now who is enforcing or interpreting at a VFW how the current statute reads in terms of which members have to sign in and which don't? Are they -- is it universal or is each VFW post sort of doing it somewhat differently and that's causing some of the confusion?

JOHN LEBLANC: Each -- as you said at the end, each post is doing its own interpretation now. There are posts in the state that look at the narrow view and make me, for example, if I'm not at my post, make me sign in on their guest book. There are other posts you can go into, such as my own, where if you're a member of the VFW, you're okay. You don't have to be signed in as a guest status.

So right now the regulations are a little bit nebulous and the interpretation is done at each post level and how they look at the definitions.

SENATOR LEONE: Wouldn't it be possible before we act as a State Legislature that the VFW could look at the current statutes and make a -- as a -- as a total organization, not individual posts, to make their own ruling on how that should be interpreted so that there's a standard within the VFW as a national organization, or as a state organization, so that each individual post is not looking at it differently but there's a mandate from above as how it should be interpreted? Wouldn't that be an easier way to go?

JOHN LEBLANC: That -- that could be possible, Senator. The only thing that I would add into that mix is that the VFW national organization and the Department of Connecticut do not get involved in the individual operations of each post canteen. The canteens are regulated not by VFW bylaws. They're regulated by the state liquor commission rules and regulations.

So that's why we're looking for the state regulations to be modified to take away the inaccuracy or the room for interpretation.

SENATOR LEONE: But I would think the state liquor regulations are more concerned with being of age so that there's --

JOHN LEBLANC: Well, that's --

SENATOR LEONE: -- they're not being served illegally. I'm not sure they were going

after the membership of -- of the organization. So that's why I was confused is why the VFW by themselves couldn't make a ruling on how to interpret the statute, the current statute.

JOHN LEBLANC: Yeah. It is basically that the -- the VFW defers to state regulations and laws to govern the operation of the canteens. Of course, age is -- is one thing. Behavior is another. All the different categories that we fall under; golf clubs, casinos, private posts, or private membership clubs. But it is the -- the one uniformed thing that regulates all of our posts -- post canteens within the state.

SENATOR LEONE: And so -- okay. So let's go beyond that point. So right now you're a VFW organization, you're a member at that post, you don't have to sign in, but if someone else comes in, they have to sign in regardless if they're a VFW member or not.

JOHN LEBLANC: In some places correct, yes, sir.

SENATOR LEONE: In some places, correct. So for one or two people that doesn't seem to be a burden. Is -- are there situations where that has become too cumbersome or unwieldy? I mean, if all it is is signing into a log book that you're not from the VFW at Rocky Hill, but you're from VFW from Stamford, the log book just shows that, you know, you had someone from outside your area visit your location.

So that is some kind of a recordkeeping for the VFW. So in that regard it makes some sense to have a login. So can you explain why it's become too unwieldy?

JOHN LEBLANC: The -- the requirement to keep the log is dictated by the law. Unwieldy? No, it's not -- not so much that it's a tremendous administrative burden on each post to maintain this book. It's more a sense of status within the organization. If I'm a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and I go to the Rocky Hill post, we feel, the state VFW feels that we should be accorded the same membership privileges as an equal VFW member at Rocky Hill or Waterbury or Stamford or -- or any place else in the state.

And this modification to the one section of the Title 30 of the liquor regulations will clarify that and make it uniform throughout the state.

SENATOR LEONE: And if we pass that, so then you as a -- as an external post coming to the Rocky Hill post, you would not have to sign in, just flash your ID saying that you're a member, you don't sign in. So the login book then would be for all none VFW members?

JOHN LEBLANC: Yes, sir.

SENATOR LEONE: And --

JOHN LEBLANC: And the same type of thing would apply, for example, to the American Legion falling under that category of a national organization.

SENATOR LEONE: That would be my other line of questioning in terms of the way the bills is written. This would affect not only just the VFW but every veteran service organization out there. So I -- I don't -- I know there's not too much testimony here tonight, but I would like to know how the other

entities, other veteran services entities, such as American Legion, such as some of the others whether it's the Jewish War Veterans, Catholic War Veterans or even the IAVA and so forth, how it would affect them and if they see this as -- as -- if they see it the same way you do because we want to make sure that, you know, we're being fair to -- to everyone. We don't want to do for one, and then there's more resistance from others.

So I would ask if you could find out for us, if we don't hear from them directly, that there is widespread support for this legislation.

JOHN LEBLANC: I can do that, Senator. Yes, sir.

SENATOR LEONE: Okay. Thank you.

REP. HENNESSY: Representative Alexander.

REP. ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And most of my questions were asked by Senator Leone. I would just mention also in my town of Enfield, we have two American Legion posts, Post 80 and 154; 154 doesn't have a bar, Post 80 does. I'm a member of 154 and not Post 80.

Some members, if I go and visit Post 80 would sign me in and some won't. And I don't think it's something where someone's trying to overlook the law or not follow the law. I get the sense that the law is not necessarily clear, the guidance from higher, if you will, hasn't been totally passed down.

So I think potentially we're looking at this and changing the statute does make sense.

And I was going to ask questions particularly about the American Legion, how other service organizations feel about this. And I do get the sense that they would also be supportive, I don't know for sure.

So in my opinion, this -- this would make sense to -- to go down this road. And when you do look, I'm not a VFW member, I'm an American Legion member like I mentioned, and I see the point that I think you're addressing with that you're a member of the larger organization, not just your one post. And it is somewhat, I guess, interesting that if you are a member of that larger organization you have to get signed in when you visit another post.

And especially in my town, we're just cross-town posts.

JOHN LEBLANC: Right, sir.

REP. ALEXANDER: And I'm not a member, obviously, like I mentioned, of the VFW, but if I did go over to Suffield and visited that club, and since I'm not a member of the VFW it would make sense at that point that I'd have to sign in since I'm not a member of that -- that post.

So, that's just kind of my -- my comments. I was going to ask a few questions, but Senator Leone had asked them for me.

So thank you very much.

REP. HENNESSY: Representative Yaccarino -- Yaccarino.

A VOICE: Oh, Senator Welch.

REP. HENNESSY: Oh, sorry. Senator Welch, you have the floor.

SENATOR WELCH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a few questions and I appreciate that you might not know the answer to them, and that's totally --

JOHN LEBLANC: I'll do my best.

SENATOR WELCH: -- acceptable. And frankly my questions are due to my naivety to the process here. I've probably signed hundreds of these books over the last few years and, frankly, never appreciated that it was required, it was a legal requirement. I just assumed it was a guest book.

And so, you know, my first question is do -- do you know why we require clubs that are permittees as well or have permittees to maintain a log like this?

JOHN LEBLANC: I don't know the -- the legal background to those sections of the statutes. I -- I'm -- would guess if -- if asked that it has to do with controlling the guests who are in a private club as opposed to a public bar. The -- we don't want to be in competition with the public -- public bars that are maybe in the neighborhood.

The signing in on the guest book is simply a way that if, for example, the liquor commission inspector comes down to a post, he or she has the ability to take the guest book and go, okay, who are the members, who are the guests? Members, please identify yourself to prove to us that you're here as a regular member.

So I'm -- I'm presuming it's a way for a control to be leveled across private clubs. I know the Elks, for example, the Eagles, they're the same way under the same regulation that a private club needs to maintain that guest book.

SENATOR WELCH: And do, you know, from your experience has the -- somebody from consumer protection or whoever is responsible for inspecting the premises, do -- do they look at these logs? Do they -- I mean, what do they do with them?

JOHN LEBLANC: We have to have them available to guests who are -- are coming in and being signed in. We have to have them available to any state inspector who comes down looking for them. We can't -- it's not something that's locked up in a filing cabinet, for example.

Subject to inspection, yes. They do look at those guest books when the inspectors come into -- into the private clubs. I -- I haven't seen them come in since I've been an active member in my post, but they have been there before. My post actually got fined years ago for not maintaining that book properly.

SENATOR WELCH: And, again, I'm just very unfamiliar with this process. But do -- are, I mean, I mean, when they look at those books, do they compare them with the volumes or quantities of alcohol that are running through there? Do they -- is there -- they don't assess a tax or anything like that --

JOHN LEBLANC: No.

SENATOR WELCH: -- for a club?

JOHN LEBLANC: We pay taxes based on our sales, a regular sales and use tax like anybody else. We pay the annual inventory tax at the end of June like anybody else. It's simply when they come in, we have to be able, as a private club, to provide the guest book, a members -- a roster of members, and they, the inspectors, can literally go through, check who's physically in the canteen, that they are a member or they're not.

And where the question might come up is if I've got a member from another post in my post, they're not on our membership list, yet they're not signed in. Right now we could technically be fined by the state for that.

SENATOR WELCH: Okay. And -- and I think -- I guess the last question would be typically are -- are guests and members when they -- when they purchase alcohol or whatever it is, are they typically paying the same price?

JOHN LEBLANC: Yes, and -- yes. Everybody pays the same price within a canteen. Yes, sir.

SENATOR WELCH: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HENNESSY: Representative Yaccarino.

SENATOR FASANO: No, Senator Fasano. I -- I did have a question.

REP. HENNESSY: Okay. I'll get to you yet.

SENATOR FASANO: Maybe OLR has the -- put you guys on the spot a little bit over there

since you made the trip. What -- do you know when the statute when into effect? Well, here's a couple questions you guys can get back.

When did the statute go into effect that you had to sign this book and do you happen to know if, you know, what the public policy purpose of the statute was?

DUKE CHEN: It says it was 1971 (inaudible).

SENATOR FASANO: That's it?

DUKE CHEN: (Inaudible).

SENATOR FASANO: And does it apply to private clubs or just these -- I -- I read in here it talks about golf country clubs, but it says as defined in some other section. Does it apply to all private clubs?

DUKE CHEN: I think it applies to (inaudible).

SENATOR FASANO: Anyone that has a club permit?

DUKE CHEN: (Inaudible). But it does look like it also applies to (inaudible).

JOHN LEBLANC: If I -- I'm sorry. If I may, Senator, the same regulation for the guest book does, like he said, apply to all private clubs within the state. One of the differences with this amendment to that section, it would apply to a VFW, an Elks, an American Legion, something that is a club that is a part of a national organization.

SENATOR FASANO: Right. Well, I understand -- I understand your point of view.

JOHN LEBLANC: Yeah, not to a golf club.

SENATOR FASANO: I just don't know why we even have the bill -- this law in place. I just don't understand the real reason for it. And a lot of the questions that were asked by Senator Welch were the ones that, frankly, I had.

Have you ever been inspected during the time that you've held the command post at your -- your place?

JOHN LEBLANC: Not as long as I've been (inaudible) which is about three and a half years now.

SENATOR FASANO: Okay. All right. All right, thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Thank you -- thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. YACCARINO: I do have just (inaudible).

REP. HENNESSY: Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

When they -- when they do inspect, do they say what they're looking for?

JOHN LEBLANC: They're looking for compliance with all the regulations that are found in Title 30, which is the state liquor regulations about yea thick.

REP. YACCARINO: I would have to think it has to do with the liquor permitting (inaudible) but I'm just curious if there's something specific they're looking for. I -- I don't know what that would be to be honest with you, but.

JOHN LEBLANC: The guest book, age of people who are in there. I guess, any -- any regulation that -- that we're required to follow, they can check for compliance.

REP. YACCARINO: Because an under-age guest could go in and -- because it is a restaurant and it's a club, and maybe that's the concern. I'm just trying to figure out what, like Senator Fasano said, why we even had this in the first place. I'm just -- I don't know.

But thank you. Thank you for your service also.

JOHN LEBLANC: Thank you.

REP. HENNESSY: Thank you.

Any other -- Representative Rose.

REP. ROSE: Thank you.

Thank you, John, for coming to speak on Bob's behalf.

I'm a ladies auxiliary lifetime member at 7788. Any time you come to Devon, I'd be more than happy to sign you in.

JOHN LEBLANC: Except that we have the trophy.

REP. ROSE: We're getting it back this year.

I was also a bartender at both the VFW and another private club, naval officers club up at Port 5 in Bridgeport. They take this book very seriously. You are only allowed certain -- members are only allowed a certain amount of guests at any given time. I don't know if it has anything to do with the statute that says that a private club

must maintain a certain percentage of club members versus guests. I'm -- I'm -- I don't know, but I know we took the book very seriously.

Also in -- in sitting at the bar and talking with other veterans, especially the older gentlemen and -- and women that come down, they are offended by signing the book if they're coming from another post. And I've had veterans come in and say, oh, I don't go to blah, blah, blah post anymore because they make me sign the book. I'm a member of the VFW.

So it's -- it's kind of a pride thing that it's interwoven into this bill that they're asking for. And barring any problems with the state statute, I would certainly support it.

JOHN LEBLANC: Thank you. You're absolutely right. Some people do take offense to it. Some have no problem, but.

REP. HENNESSY: Thank you, Representative Rose.

Are there any more questions?

Thank you John.

JOHN LEBLANC: Okay. Thank you.

And if I may, Senator Osten, you've been trying to get poppies? Those come from the VFW. What quantity do you need?

SENATOR OSTEN: I -- I have them here, my post -- I'm an American Legion member, Post 85 in Baltic, and I've already ordered them. I've already paid for them. I'm just trying to get the box of them, that's all, because I

want to do a poppy day and I -- I promised -
- I'm the treasurer for our post. I know I
have a lot of different jobs, but I'm the
treasurer for Post 85 and because no one
else from Baltic wants to drive up here and
I'm working in Hartford, I have tried but
missed coming down here to meet the ladies
auxiliary because they have poppies right
now. We've ordered them through them.

JOHN LEBLANC: It's a matter of delivery system.

SENATOR OSTEN: I'd order them through you next
time, but we, you know, we are trying to
just get the poppies so we can have our
poppy day, that's all.

JOHN LEBLANC: Okay. Thank you, Senator.

Okay. Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

REP. HENNESSY: Thank you.

Is there anyone who -- who has not signed up
today and would like to testify?

Okay. I see that there's no one coming.

I would just like to thank everyone for
coming. Thank you Capitol Police. Thank
you sound man down there, you did a great
job. Thank you LCO and OLR and staff and
everyone.

Thank you, Commissioner, for hosting us.

Thank you very much.

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**TESTAMONY BY JOHN C LEBLANC
Department of Connecticut
Veterans of Foreign Wars
To Veterans Affairs Committee
Relating to SB 293**

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is John Leblanc and I am the State Inspector of the Connecticut Veterans of Foreign Wars. Bob Frolick, our State Commander had planned to address you today but, unfortunately, is in Washington attending a national conference. I am here as his representative today.

The issue before us today concerns changes to State Liquor Regulations as it relates to guest book requirements. SB 293, which the Connecticut Veterans of Foreign Wars supports, is the bill being considered.

Three sections of Title 30 relate to club members and guest book requirements.

One defines members, and I'll paraphrase here without all the legalese, as individuals who have a voice in the election of club officers and in the operation of the club. Guest book requirements specify that anyone not a member of the club must be properly signed in on the guest book.

These regulations are considered to require VFW members visiting a post that is not their home post, to be signed in as a guest. No different than anyone else. The current statues look at our organization as 118 individual entities, all regulated by the same provisions. In one way we are that. 118 individually chartered posts, each unique in its existence. In many ways though, and how we look at it, we are 118 members of one family – the Department of Connecticut.

Looking back a moment to how the law defines a member, there is a lot of room for differing interpretations. SB 293 will clarify and standardize the issue. Some clubs take a narrow view and require any VFW member not of that post to

sign in. Others take a broader view that any VFW member has membership privileges in any post.

We believe, and would like SB 293 adopted, in the broader view of membership.

Say, for example, I visit the post in Devon. My home post is 201 in Waterbury. I may be required to sign in as a guest. Here's the catch though. I am a District officer, elected, in part by the Devon post. In that capacity I have a voice in Devon post operations. I am also a State Officer and as such, I have a voice in the operation of all posts throughout the state. Therefore, I have input and influence on the operation of posts not my home post.

Each and every member within the state actually has, through their VFW membership, a voice in club operations at these three different levels. At their post directly, at District level and at State level. All have the right to run for office at all levels.

With this in mind, every member can be deemed to qualify, at any post, as a regular member, regardless of home post affiliation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue. Please pass SB 293.