



# STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

## OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

---

Daniel J. McKee **Governor**  
Kasim J. Yarn **Director**

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon Jr.  
Chair, House Corporations Committee  
State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: H5043 – AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS -- DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICES**

Dear Chair Solomon:

Please accept this letter as a record of the Office of Veterans Services' support for H5043. If passed, the bill would provide protection and prevent unethical, improper conduct and the collection of fees by anyone advising or assisting a veteran in filing a claim for disability benefits with the Department of Veterans Affairs, except as authorized by federal law, and impose penalties under the deceptive trade practices provisions.

The Veteran community has recently been exploited by alleged "claim sharks," those individuals or companies charging hefty fees to assist or consult Veterans with filing their VA benefits claims. This practice is illegal. Claim sharks are not VA-accredited and are not required to adhere to the same professional and ethical standards as VA-accredited entities, such as our own Veteran Service Officers at the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Services in Warwick. Unfortunately, we in the Veteran space have heard of situations where claim sharks misled Veterans, coerced them to forego VA exams, sign contracts, and charged exorbitant fees for services that are already provided by legitimate and free resources.

Efforts to combat these predatory practices have proliferated nationwide. House Bill 5043 is thoughtful legislation that ensures Veterans are not taken advantage of during an already challenging process. Veterans have admirably served and sacrificed for our great nation and our beloved Ocean State. They deserve protection and access to the best care and resources.

I appreciate your partnership and consideration of this letter. I urge the Committee to support H5043.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. J. Yarn", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Kasim J. Yarn  
Director of Veterans Services

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Corporation Committee  
The Honorable Samuel A. Azzinaro  
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House of  
Representatives  
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy