

From: Craig <cskoha@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, February 7, 2022 1:43 PM
To: Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph; Rep. Azzinaro, Samuel A.; House Finance Committee
Cc: Craig
Subject: Article 6-Taxation-Military Pensions
Attachments: Military Pension letter.pages

Subject: (Blanket) Military Pensions- AGAINST

Dear Speaker Shekarchi, Rep. Azzinaro, House Finance Committee: I have decided that it is NOT in my best interest to testify at the hearing on Thursday but submit this letter and my original letter for consideration. I have spoken to two other Nam Vets (a RI resident who is NOT a military retiree, and the other a reserve retiree in another State) and both think that I have the right idea BUT: I am going to offend my military friends, both the retired "Weekend Warriors" (no disrespect intended but that's what they were called in my day) and the retired active duty types. I don't want to do this.

What I want to do is switch the emphasis from the retired to the "Fallen" veterans. My RI friend has more retired military friends than I do and he stated (I am not making this up- they talk more about trying to get more money from of their pensions than any other subject). That alone tells me that I'll make a lot of enemies, if I testify.

I stand by my ATTACHED letter(sent to two Reps and a senator a few years ago) and E-mails to Speaker Shekarchi but I did forget that reservists perform six months of active duty before their weekend active duties. It still doesn't qualify, in IMHO, as duty spent in the Nam or some other foreign country.

I'm also afraid that there are many retired active duty military that actually believe that they deserve more than their pensions and free medical, (that may also apply to their spouses). Aren't free meals on Veteran's day, a holiday that celebrates our dedication to our country, discounts at numerous stores, (year round), and "Thank you for your Service" comments , enough? If they were true "MILITARY" they would remember the Soldiers Creed "I will never leave a FALLEN Comrade" and want to help the less fortunate, disabled, homeless veterans, not line their pockets with extra dollars that could have served a higher purpose.

One last thing, I don't want to be a fall guy, hated by all retired veterans, many have earned and deserve what they get and it's ample, but there are those veterans who have "Fallen" in this State and the additional moneys should go to them in the form of more assistance/rehab programs.

On another topic: Elections are coming up, please don't let this become a political ploy for more votes (as I think it is for the Governor) AND I believe that you, Rep. Shekarchi indicated that the State must consider the future, take its time and be sure that its current massive resources are not exhausted before all of your priorities are addressed. Please continue with that thought. In addition this commitment to retired veterans is a supposed to be a long term

commitment and will need funding each year. That is, unless the Legislature changes the law like it did to us retired State employees (our promised COLA's) and those surpluses at the end of each fiscal year that were supposed to go to the Retirement fund.. I had to put this in because I basically don't trust politicians. Mr. Speaker, you may not be a typical politicians but I don't know you, AND you were there when Gina and the Legislature basically "screwed" all the PRE Pension Law Change, Retirees and basically assured that the pension fund will never be funded enough to begin COLA's again. Good- I got that off my chest? The above paragraph is all about many self-serving politicians who only look to the future to their reelections.

There are many categories of veterans: those who have retired from active duty, from the reserves; those who spent one, two, three or more years in the military by lottery, or drafted, or ROTC, are disabled or just signed up, I'm sure there are more. Why just give a few the tax break, why **ALIENATE** the rest, my letter tells you why and especially for those who served in the Nam, Iraq, Afganistan. Give to the "Fallen", the needy, the disabled, the homeless vets, OR, if you have to satisfy the Military lobbyists, give ALL vets an additional exemption, don't just give to those who are reaping or about to reap the benefits of a military retirement, OR, have the Means Test so that the extra dollars go to the more needy retirees.

PS: After reading this AM's Providence Journal about Article 6, I'd think that if any veteran wanted to avoid State taxes, or even Retired Pension taxes they would have moved to Florida ALREADY!

Sincerely, Craig Kohanski

Sent from my iPad