

Unfavorable Testimony on House Bill No. 7781

Submitted to the House Committee on Special Legislation

Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Chairwoman Alzate, Vice Chairs Diaz, Lombardi and honorable members of the House Committee on Special Legislation:

My name is **John P Gallo Sr.**, and I am submitting this testimony in **opposition** to **House Bill 7781**, which proposes to change the name of Rhode Island’s Victory Day holiday to “Peace and Remembrance Day.”

Preserving the Historical Integrity of Victory Day

Victory Day is not merely a date on the calendar. It is a solemn and historically grounded observance marking the end of World War II and the defeat of Imperial Japan—a conflict that claimed more than 400,000 American lives and reshaped the world. Rhode Island remains the only state that continues to honor this day, and that distinction reflects our deep respect for the generation that fought, sacrificed, and ultimately secured victory over tyranny.

Changing the name of the holiday risks severing the direct historical connection to the event it commemorates. “Victory Day” is not a celebration of war; it is a recognition of the end of one of the deadliest conflicts in human history and the triumph of freedom over aggression. The name itself carries the weight of that history.

Honoring Veterans and Their Families

For many Rhode Island families—especially those with loved ones who served in World War II—Victory Day is a meaningful reminder of service, sacrifice, and the cost of preserving democracy. Renaming the holiday may unintentionally diminish that legacy and create confusion about what, exactly, the state is commemorating.

Veterans’ organizations across Rhode Island continue to observe Victory Day with dignity and reverence. The current name aligns with their lived experience and the historical record. Altering it without broad consensus from the veteran community risks sending the wrong message to those who served.

A Well-Intentioned but Unnecessary Change

While the desire to promote peace and remembrance is understandable and commendable, Rhode Island already has multiple avenues to honor those values—Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and numerous local observances. Victory Day serves a distinct and irreplaceable purpose: it marks a specific historical moment that should remain clearly identified.

Renaming the holiday does not enhance understanding or unity. Instead, it may dilute the historical significance of the day and inadvertently obscure the lessons of World War II.

Conclusion

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to give **House Bill 7781** an **unfavorable recommendation** and preserve the name and meaning of Victory Day as it has long been recognized in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to honoring our state's veterans and historical heritage.

Respectfully submitted,

John P Gallo Sr., Chairman
Legislation Committee
United Veterans Council of Rhode Island