



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

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

March 17, 2025

The Honorable Karen Alzate
Chair, House Committee on Special Legislation
House Committee on
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: H7781 - AN ACT RELATING TO HOLIDAYS AND DAYS OF SPECIAL OBSERVANCE --
HOLIDAYS**

Dear Chair Alzate,

I write in opposition to House Bill **7781**. While World War II may seem like a distant chapter in history, it remains a living reality for many of Rhode Island's brave Veterans. We are fortunate that several Rhode Island Veterans from that conflict are still with us. At present, seven (7) World War II Veterans are receiving quality care at our state-run Veterans Home in Bristol. For them - and for countless military families, World War II is not a distant memory; it is a lived experience.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed the nation, stating: "December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan...With confidence in our armed forces - with the unbounding determination of our people - we will gain the inevitable triumph - so help us God."

According to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1,669 Rhode Islanders made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II, giving their lives in defense of our nation. America's greatness is founded upon the service and sacrifice of these individuals. The continued safety, security, and freedoms we enjoy today are made possible by those who have worn - and continue to wear - the uniform. Their sacrifices are the backbone of the freedoms we hold dear.

"Service before self" is a phrase Veterans know all too well. The attack on Pearl Harbor remains a vivid reminder of the devastating consequences of conflict and the importance of recognizing tragedy and injustice when they occur.

As our Veterans' and military families' chief advocate, I view H7781 through the lens of the Gold Star Family experience. A Gold Star Family refers to the immediate family members of a service member who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Their loss reminds us of the profound cost of freedom. We must never forget - and we must never allow future generations to forget - those who gave their lives for the freedoms we too often take for granted. I pray that our nation will always acknowledge those who have served our country with honor and distinction.

RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Thank you for your time, your continued partnership, and your unwavering support of Rhode Island's Veterans and their families. I respectfully ask for your vote in opposing House Bill 7781.

Sincerely,



Kasim J. Yarn
Director of Veterans Services

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Special Legislation
The Honorable Jennifer A. Stewart
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House of Representatives
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy