



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

RIVETS

OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

Daniel J. McKee **Governor**

Kasim J. Yarn **Director**

March 9, 2022

The Honorable Samuel Azzinaro
Chair, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
via email: Rep-Azzinaro@rilegislature.gov
via email: HouseVeteransAffairs@rilegislature.gov

RE: H-7768 – Relating to Military Affairs and Defense – Rhode Island Veterans Home

Dear Chairman Azzinaro:

I write today in support of H-7768 – Relating to Military Affairs and Defense – Rhode Island Veterans Home, which was introduced at the request of the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Services. This legislation would amend the requirements of the Rhode Island Veterans Home Administrator, removing the Veteran requirement while ensuring the individual filling that position is a licensed nursing home administrator (LNHA). Currently, state statute calls for the individual filling the administrator position be a Veteran, however the administrator position at the Rhode Island Veterans Home has been vacant for two years and no candidate meeting the current requirements has applied during the continuous, open recruitment period.

While COVID-19 has significantly impacted the nursing home industry, the challenge of attracting and retaining qualified LNHAs to run efficient nursing homes has been a challenge since before the pandemic. Demand for long term care services is increasing as our population ages, and at the same time a generation of aging-services leaders – baby boomers – are retiring. This shortage of LNHAs, coupled with the added Veterans requirement, has prevented the Office of Veterans Services from hiring a permanent administrator for the Rhode Island Veterans Home.

Additionally, the Veteran requirement for the Rhode Island Veterans Home administrator was in place prior to the establishment of the position of Director of Veterans Services. The administrator now reports to the Director of Veterans Services, hence the requirement that a Veteran oversee the Rhode Island Veterans Home is in place, as Rhode Island General Law §30-17.1-6(a) states, in part, "The director of the office of veterans' affairs shall be a person qualified through experience and training and shall be an honorably discharged war veteran of the United States armed forces."

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As always, I thank you for your partnership and consideration of this letter. Your leadership and advocacy for Rhode Island's Veterans and their families is appreciated.

Regards,



Kasim J. Yarn
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House