



# RIVETS

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

Daniel J. McKee **Governor**

Kasim J. Yarn **Director**

March 14, 2023

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](mailto:Rep-Azzinaro@rilegislature.gov)  
via email: [HouseVeteransAffairs@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseVeteransAffairs@rilegislature.gov)

RE: H-5466 – Relating to Military Affairs and Defense – Rhode Island Veterans Home

Dear Chairman Azzinaro:

I write today in support of H-5466 – 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 three years and no qualified 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.

Veterans homes in other states either do not require the administrator to be a Veteran, or have recently removed the requirement due to difficulty in hiring for the position with the Veteran requirement in place. States such as Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and others never required their Veterans Home administrator to be a Veteran. States such as Delaware, Maine and Massachusetts did require the administrator to be a Veteran and have either recently removed the requirement and/or are looking to remove the requirement due to the difficulty in recruiting and hiring for the position.

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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 who is required to be a Veteran, 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.” 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 always, I thank you for your partnership and consideration of this letter and I urge the Committee to support this bill. Your leadership and advocacy for Rhode Island’s Veterans and their families are appreciated.

Regards,



Kasim J. Yarn  
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
Lynne Urbani, Director of Policy, House of Representatives