



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

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

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Samuel A. Azzinaro
Chair, House Veterans' Affairs Committee
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H5387 - An Act Relating to Military Affairs and Defense – Rhode Island Veterans' Home

Dear Chair Azzinaro:

Please accept this letter for the record to reflect the Office of Veterans Services' support for H5387, scheduled for a hearing on February 12, 2025. If passed, the bill will add "Space Force" to the branches of military service included in various sections of Rhode Island General Law, which currently include the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

The United States Space Force was first established as an independent branch of the uniformed services in 2019. Definitions of military service and uniformed service vary between states, and some do not recognize the Space Force. The time has come to address this discrepancy and plan for the future. States across the country, including those in New England, are aligning their definitions of the armed forces to include the Space Force. All neighboring New England states have enacted this updated definition.

Passing this legislation will ensure that all eligible Rhode Island service members and their family members receive access to state benefits. Rhode Island benefits include burial at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Exeter, exceptional quality care at the Veterans Home in Bristol, and access to skilled veteran service officers at the Veterans Resource Center in Warwick.

I thank you for your partnership and consideration of this letter, and I urge the Committee to support H5387.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Yarn", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kasim J. Yarn
Director of Veterans Services

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy