

Beth Leinberry, CDR, USN, Ret. STATEMENT against Bill 5487

I am a retired USN Commander, having served 25 years of active duty, who has resided in Rhode Island since 2004. I do not support Bill 5487, the establishment of an oversight commission over the Veterans Affairs in the State of Rhode Island. Undermining the authority of the current Veteran Leadership in both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the RI Veterans Home is not only counterproductive but places Veterans issues in the midst of politics and legislators that are not Veterans.

The Director of Veterans Affairs who reports directly to the governor should not be subject to oversight by a Commission. In the many leadership positions I have held as a Civil Engineers Corps officer in the Navy I have witnessed first hand how an oversight group, particularly of non-military personnel, interferes in good leadership, effective management, and clouds good decision making with personal agenda's and misinformation. It makes the system more ineffective by demanding useless reports and continuous information, precluding the chain of command from actually getting the job done. If you have appointed the right director, you don't need an oversight commission.

As a second career nurse, who has a father in the Veterans Home and who has worked in several nursing homes in RI, I can assure you, the legislators have no business making decisions about a nursing home. It is an industry with lots of challenges, but one that needs to be run by someone that knows health and human services, and should not have to answer to a commission of legislators. The legislative commission has no business making any decisions about the RIVH or any other nursing home. Again, another layer of 'oversight' to provide reports to and answer questions, people that don't know the industry. You don't learn it by reading a few reports, you learn it by working in it.

I have no comment about the Veteran's Cemetery.

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