

Favorable Testimony on S-2916

Relating to Taxation — Property Subject to Taxation

Chairman Jacob Bissaillon, Vice Chairwomen Alana M. DiMario, and members of the Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee,

My name is **John Gallo**, Chairman, Legislation Committee of the United Veterans Council of Rhode Island and a leader with VFW RI Department. I am submitting this testimony **in strong support of S-2916**, introduced by Senators **Thompson** and **Patalano**.

Purpose of S-2916

S-2916 updates Rhode Island's municipal veterans' property tax exemption by increasing the minimum exemption from **\$1,000 to \$6,000**. This change restores the value of a benefit that has remained stagnant for decades while housing costs, municipal tax burdens, and the cost of living have risen dramatically.

Legislative status and timing

According to the official bill history, S-2916 was:

- **Introduced and referred** to the Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee on **March 4, 2026**
- **Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration** on **March 12, 2026**

This upcoming hearing provides an important opportunity to modernize a long-standing veterans' benefit that has lost most of its intended impact.

Why the increase is overdue

The current \$1,000 minimum exemption no longer provides meaningful relief. Veterans—especially older veterans, disabled veterans, and surviving spouses—are facing rising property taxes, medical expenses, and inflation. A \$6,000 minimum exemption:

- **Restores the original intent** of providing tangible, statewide tax relief
- **Creates equity across municipalities**, ensuring veterans receive a consistent baseline benefit regardless of where they live
- **Strengthens financial stability** for veterans on fixed incomes
- **Requires no new administrative structure**, as municipalities already manage these exemptions

Impact on Rhode Island veterans and communities

For many veterans, even modest tax relief can determine whether they can remain in their homes. S-2916 provides a practical, fiscally responsible adjustment that acknowledges service while helping veterans meet today's economic realities.

Closing

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to give **favorable consideration** to S-2916 at its March 12 hearing. Updating the minimum veterans' exemption to \$6,000 is a meaningful, overdue step toward honoring those who served our state and nation.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to Rhode Island's veterans.

Respectfully Submitted,

John P Gallo Sr., Chairman
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