



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
**OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE**

March 12, 2026

The Honorable Walter S. Felag Jr.  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans' Affairs  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

***RE: 2026 S 2996 – An Act Relating to Military Affairs and Defense – Decorations***

Dear Chairman Felag:

I write in strong support of S 2996, an Act relating to Military Affairs and Defense — Decorations (Act). This legislation would create three meaningful new awards for members of the Rhode Island National Guard and expand eligibility for the Rhode Island Star, and I urge the Committee to recommend passage.

The men and women of the Rhode Island National Guard serve our state and nation with extraordinary dedication, often in roles that go unrecognized by the broader public. The Act would recognize these contributions by establishing three new honors that reflect the full range of their service.

The Rhode Island Legion of Merit would fill a meaningful gap in our state's military awards structure, recognizing those who have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service in key leadership positions.

The Military Funeral Honors Ribbon would recognize one of the most solemn duties a service member can perform — rendering final honors to a fallen comrade. Service members who complete 100 funeral honors missions deserve formal recognition for this sacred responsibility, and this ribbon would provide it.

The State Partnership Program Ribbon would honor those who deploy in support of Rhode Island's partnerships with The Bahamas and Timor-Leste — advancing Rhode Island's global partnerships and demonstrating, firsthand, the caliber of those who wear the uniform.

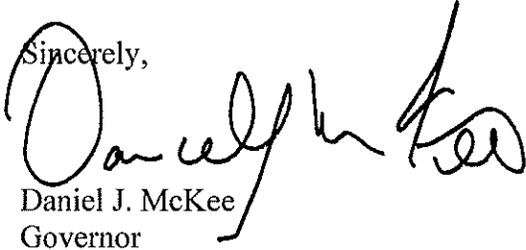
The bill also extends eligibility for the Rhode Island Star to civilian government employees and senior leaders of foreign governments whose contributions to our state merit recognition at the highest level.

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Rhode Island has a history of honoring those who serve. This Act would provide the National Guard with additional ways to honor its service men and women. I respectfully request that this Honorable Committee recommend passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. McKee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke.

Daniel J. McKee  
Governor

CC: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans' Affairs  
Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff