



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Haspel-Staab Post 551 61-55 69th Street Middle Village, NY 11379

Testimony in Support of Comprehensive Resources for Veterans

Introduction

Chairperson and esteemed members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this body on behalf of the brave men and women who have selflessly served our nation. Today, I am here to express strong support for several critical initiatives aimed at providing meaningful resources to veterans and their families. These proposals—from supporting veteran vendors to prioritizing affordable housing access—are not merely policies; they are a reflection of our collective gratitude and responsibility to honor those who have served.

Supporting Veteran Vendors: Removing Barriers to Entrepreneurship

Veterans have demonstrated exceptional leadership, discipline, and resilience in their military service. Many leverage these qualities to become entrepreneurs, contributing to local economies and fostering innovation. However, they often face significant financial and logistical barriers.

By waiving permit fees for mobile food unit commissaries that reserve space for veteran vendors, we can help level the playing field. This initiative reduces financial strain, enabling veterans to establish sustainable businesses, create jobs, and participate more fully in our local economies. Supporting veteran vendors is not just good policy; it is a tangible way to empower those who have given so much to our nation.

Cure Periods for Veterans Service Organizations: Preserving Mission-Critical Services

Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) are the backbone of community-based support for veterans. These organizations provide essential services, including counseling, job placement assistance, and advocacy. However, they often operate with limited resources and face regulatory challenges that can hinder their effectiveness.

Establishing cure periods for certain violations would grant VSOs the opportunity to address compliance issues without incurring immediate penalties. This approach ensures that these organizations can continue their critical work uninterrupted while maintaining accountability. It is a balanced and compassionate solution that reflects our commitment to supporting organizations dedicated to serving veterans.

Rental Assistance for Homeless Veterans: A Lifeline for Stability

The issue of veteran homelessness is a moral and societal crisis. Many veterans face unique challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder, physical disabilities, and economic hardship, which increase their risk of homelessness. Rental assistance programs specifically tailored to veterans are a proven strategy for addressing this urgent issue.

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Expanding rental assistance ensures that homeless veterans have access to stable housing, a foundational step in their journey toward reintegration and self-sufficiency. By prioritizing this initiative, we affirm our commitment to ensuring that no veteran is left without a roof over their head.

Property Tax Exemption for Veterans with 100% Service-Connected Disabilities (S.2028-A/A.2965-A)

Veterans who have sustained 100% service-connected disabilities have made profound sacrifices in defense of our nation. These individuals face significant physical and financial challenges that make homeownership and economic stability particularly difficult.

The proposed property tax exemption under S.2028-A/A.2965-A is a critical step in alleviating these burdens. By reducing the financial strain of property taxes, we can help disabled veterans maintain homeownership and stability, ensuring they receive the recognition and support they deserve. This measure is not just financial relief; it is an acknowledgment of their extraordinary service and sacrifice.

Public Housing Admission Preferences for Veterans

Affordable housing is increasingly out of reach for many, especially in urban areas like New York City. Veterans, who have given so much to our country, deserve prioritized access to public housing to help them reintegrate into civilian life with dignity and stability.

Including an admission preference for veterans in the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) next proposed agency plan would ensure that veterans have a fair opportunity to secure affordable housing. This policy not only addresses a pressing need but also demonstrates our unwavering commitment to those who have served.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

These initiatives represent more than policy proposals; they embody our nation's commitment to honor and support its veterans. By waiving permit fees for veteran vendors, granting cure periods for VSOs, expanding rental assistance, enacting property tax exemptions, and prioritizing public housing access, we take meaningful steps to improve the lives of those who have sacrificed so much for us.

I urge this committee to act decisively in advancing these measures. Let us reaffirm our shared obligation to those who have served and ensure they have the resources, support, and opportunities they so richly deserve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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