



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
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Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr., Chairman
House Committee on Corporations
State House, Room 101
Providence, RI 02903

Re: HB 5043: Protecting Veterans from “Claims Sharks”

Dear Chairman Solomon and Members of the House Corporations Committee,

I write today to express my support for HB 5043, sponsored by Representative Samuel Azzinaro, legislation that would protect veterans against the predatory practices of “claims sharks,” who take advantage of those who serve and sacrifice for our nation.

In recent years, the number of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits claims has significantly increased, amounting to over \$135 billion. This increase has resulted in unaccredited claims consultants, or “claims sharks,” preying on veterans for their own profit. These “claims sharks” often mislead claimants and coerce veterans to sign contracts that secure a portion of future benefits for themselves – taking away our veteran’s hard-earned money. Currently, there is no state oversight into these practices, nor are there penalties for the perpetrators. Instead, veterans are left to deal with the fallout of these predatory practices without support from the state.

Ensuring that veterans receive the care and benefits they’ve earned is not just a moral obligation, but a vital responsibility. As the Trump Administration works quickly to dismantle the federal support system for veterans, providing support to veterans in Rhode Island is more critical than ever. This proposed legislation protects veterans from these predatory practices by: (1) prohibiting fees charged to veterans and (2) holding veterans service providers to the same ethical standards as attorneys licensed to practice law in Rhode Island. As a state, we must support legislation that ensures our veterans are protected from those who seek to take advantage of their hard-earned benefits in order to enrich themselves.

We have a responsibility to protect our over 54,000 Rhode Island veterans from these predatory practices and ensure they receive the benefits they deserve – HB 5043 will do just that. As always, I appreciate the Committee’s consideration of this legislation, and I am available for any further questions the Committee may have.

Sincerely,

Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General