

## **Testimony against passage of H-5419**

**Chairman Solomon,**

**Chairman Solomon and members of the House Corporations Committee. My name is John Gallo and I am the Chairman of the Legislation Committee of the United Veterans Council of RI. I am also a retired veteran with over forty-two years of military service. The UVCRI is made up of nine mayor veterans organizations that have a State Department in Rhode Island.**

### **We are against passage of H-5419**

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VA accreditation for entities representing veterans would be a significant step toward protecting their rights and ensuring the quality of assistance they receive. Veterans often face complex processes when applying for benefits, and having certified representatives helps safeguard them from misinformation or exploitation.

Entities that are VA-accredited have met stringent requirements and are held to high ethical standards, ensuring that veterans receive accurate and reliable support. Extending such accreditation requirements across all states would create consistency and uniformity, ultimately benefiting veterans nationwide.

## **Ensuring Ethical Representation for Veterans in Benefits Claims**

**Introduction:** Veterans have dedicated their lives to serving our country, often facing sacrifices that can leave them needing support and assistance. It is critical to protect these heroes from exploitation when seeking benefits they rightly deserve. Requiring VA certification for entities representing veterans in their claims is a necessary step to safeguard their interests and ensure reliable, trustworthy advocacy.

### **Key Points:**

- 1. Protect Veterans from Predatory Practices:**
  - Veterans are vulnerable to unscrupulous businesses that charge exorbitant fees without delivering results.
  - VA-accredited representatives are held to high standards, ensuring veterans receive ethical and competent service.
- 2. Ensure Accurate and Reliable Guidance:**
  - Navigating the complexities of veterans' benefits can be challenging.
  - VA-accredited representatives are trained to understand benefits systems comprehensively, reducing errors and enhancing claim success rates.
- 3. Uphold Consistency Across States:**
  - Variability in state laws allows gaps where unaccredited entities can exploit veterans.

- Mandating VA certification will create uniform standards of service.
- 4. **Promote Confidence in Veterans' Services:**
  - Accreditation fosters trust, assuring veterans that their claims are in capable hands.
  - This requirement aligns with the commitment to honor and support those who have served.

**Counterarguments and Rebuttals:** Some may argue that mandatory certification could limit the availability of representatives. However, encouraging accreditation programs and providing access to resources will expand the pool of certified representatives, enhancing the overall quality of services for veterans.

**Call to Action:** Let us honor the service of our veterans by ensuring the integrity of the systems designed to support them. I urge lawmakers to adopt legislation requiring VA certification for firms and individuals representing veterans in their claims.

Thank You for your patience and attention to this very important veteran issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

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