

ACLU OF RI POSITION: AMEND

**TESTIMONY ON 25-H 5419,
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS --
SAFEGUARDING AMERICAN VETERAN EMPOWERMENT ACT ("SAVE ACT")
March 25, 2025**

The ACLU of Rhode Island has no position generally on this bill, which appears designed to protect veterans from financial predators who engage in unethical or unlawful conduct when representing veterans in matters involving disability benefits.

However, we do wish to raise a concern about one provision in the bill, which appears on Page 3, lines 4-7. That section would require any business that provides assistance on veterans' benefits, including law offices, to have any person with access to veterans' files to undergo a criminal record check.

We have long argued against open-ended requirements of criminal records checks as they subject individuals with a criminal background, no matter what crimes they have been convicted of or how long ago their conviction was, to unnecessary discrimination and invasions of personal privacy. In this instance, we believe that the firms engaged in this representation should be able to decide for themselves the trustworthiness of the people working on these matters rather than forcing them to undergo a criminal records check and reveal any past history, no matter how irrelevant.

Because we think this section goes too far in mandating criminal records checks, we urge that this provision be deleted.

Thank you for considering our views.