



CONNECTICUT STATE
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Testimony by Gail Coppage, Director of
Innovation & Outreach**

Board of Regents for Higher Education
Before the Veterans Affairs Committee
February 25, 2014

Senators Leone and Welsh, Representatives Hennessey and Yaccarino, and members of the Committee, my name is Gail Coppage, and I am Director of Innovation & Outreach for the Board of Regents for Higher Education, the governing body of the state's 12 community colleges, four state universities, and Charter Oak State College, the state's only fully-online public college. I was also the Board of Regents representative to the Military Occupational Specialty Task Force, and I am pleased to provide comment on **SB 212: An Act Concerning Implementation of the Recommendations of the Military Occupational Specialty Task Force.**

One of the key priorities of the Board of Regents for Higher Education has been to insure that all 17 our institutions maintain an agreement with the American Council on Education (ACE) that allows them to review existing military expertise and training for appropriate academic credit. These evaluations recognize the educational component of military service, and apply that knowledge toward a credential from one of our institutions, reducing cost and time necessary for student completion.

In the last several months, the last of our institutions agreed to contract with ACE to support the reintegration of student-veterans into our classrooms by ensuring that military training is considered worthy of college credit where there is alignment with our programming.

The Board of Regents understands the need to support our returning veterans across the state and we are in the process of strengthening efforts across the system to further support our veterans. Last fall the Board of Regents hosted a Veterans Stakeholder's Conference at Manchester Community College. Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman joined us for this event which featured key faculty and staff from each of our seventeen institutions meeting to discuss the current and future needs of this student population. This event has further blossomed into a more regular effort at system coordination, as representatives now regularly meet to discuss these and other related issues.

We appreciate the continued support and interest of the General Assembly in working to best assist our returning veterans in rejoining the ranks of the Connecticut workforce and enrolling in state institutions, and are pleased to state that we meet the proposed standard at all of our institutions. This effort provides balance between the need to support student-veterans as well as to support the demands of academic integrity.

I would also like to point out that **HB 5207** contains language that is identical to this proposed bill, and I encourage this Committee to work together with the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement as you move forward.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact Kyle Thomas, Legislative Program Manager at 860-723-0017.