

Testimony for Public Hearing
Committee on Veteran's Affairs
February 17, 2015

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Oakdale Connecticut 06370

Proposed H.B. No. 6372 Veterans' Affairs Committee – An Act Concerning Tuition
Waivers For Members of the Armed Forces

Good afternoon Co-Chair Flexer, Co-Chair Hennessy; and good afternoon members
of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. My name is Senior Chief Fire Control
Technician Ryan Matthew Hartman, and I am both a Connecticut born state resident
and a twenty-one year veteran of the United States Navy, sixteen of which were
served in the state of Connecticut.

I joined the Navy with my parent's consent as a seventeen-year-old Maloney High
School Junior. At that time in my life I knew how important a college degree was,
but also knew that as much as I wanted it I did not have the maturity or mental
focus to be a successful college student. I had a few older friends from my
neighborhood that joined the Navy after high school and they talked very highly of
both the Navy's Tuition Assistance Program and the Connecticut Veteran's Tuition
Waiver. So, the logical thing in my mind was to join the Navy and figure out how to
obtain my college degree later.

Since then I have completed two Surge Deployments, three Trident Deterrent
Patrols and four six-month EUCOM deployments in the interest of National Security.
I have tracked hostile surfaced and submerged contacts around the globe and in
2003 I launched Tomahawk Cruise Missiles into Iraq during Operation Iraqi
Freedom. I would like it to be known that as the Fire Control Division Leading Petty
Officer I was not just onboard for the launching. I personally planned every mission
and my hand rotated the launcher switch to initiate the launch process. During this
time I also started a family and earned both my Associate's and Bachelor's degrees.
It pains me to be told by the head of the University of Connecticut's Veterans' Affairs
Office that after serving in the Navy for twenty-one years, after being honorably
discharged five times and reenlisting five times and after leaving my family behind
for six months at a time that I am not considered a veteran in the eyes of the
University of Connecticut. It pains me even more to have to fight for rights as a
Veteran. Rights that I would have been entitled to in 1998 if I had not made the
decision to make a career out of serving our great nation.

I stand before you today asking you to consider amending our State's General
Statutes to extend the current Veteran's Tuition Waiver to all Connecticut born state
residents currently serving honorably within the Armed Forces of the United States
of America.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Very Respectfully,

FTCS/SS Ryan M. Hartman USN