



The Hartford Wire Works

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March 3, 2016

Chairmen Flexer and Hennessy
Joint Committee on Veterans Affairs
State Capitol Building, Room 509A
Hartford, CT 06106

Senators and Representatives:

I appear before you in strong support of Senate Bill 2, an Act Supporting Veteran-Owned Small Businesses.

I was a tank officer in the Army's Third Infantry Division, serving two tours in Iraq. I'm currently the President of The Hartford Wire Works, a fence manufacturing and installation company in Windsor. Our company is a member of the Smaller Manufacturers Association of Connecticut, the New Haven Manufacturers Association, the American Fence Association, the National Association of Veteran Owned Businesses, and the Connecticut Veterans Chamber of Commerce.

Aiding veteran-owned companies isn't just a moral imperative for the state. Veterans have a unique set of skills and experiences that positions us well as entrepreneurs. We have learned, through training and experience, to push through adversity and overcome unexpected obstacles. These are the people we, as a state, want leading the next generation of Connecticut start-ups and turn-arounds. For myself, I know that no matter what difficult challenges I might face as a business owner, it will still not be the "hardest thing I've ever done."

This bill gives new veteran-owned companies the head start that they need to take off. Early municipal contracts easily translate to increased business and growth. It supports exactly the kind of entrepreneurs that our state needs more of. And, it is the reason that New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts all have legislation aiding their veteran-owned businesses.

I've been proud to work closely with the Senate leadership staff on crafting this bill, and with the Veterans Chamber's efforts towards this. It is a milestone that will have a marked positive impact on veteran owned businesses in our state.

I strongly urge your passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Steve Gifford

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