



Dear Neighbor:

*In Connecticut, we are fortunate to have thousands of men and women serving in our armed forces and National Guard. Whether they have served in the past, or are currently on active duty, they deserve the best benefits and services we can provide.*

*The 2005 and 2006 sessions of the General Assembly produced a number of new laws affecting Veterans. This edition of “Capitol News” summarizes some of these new initiatives for your review.*

*For a complete summary of the most recent Acts Affecting Veterans, please call my Capitol office at 1-800-842-8267.*

*If you have any questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at the toll-free number or by E-mail at:*

[Steve.Fontana@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Steve.Fontana@cga.ct.gov)

Best Regards,

Steve Fontana  
State Representative, 87<sup>th</sup> District

**Representative Steve Fontana - serving North Haven**

Legislative Office Building, Room 3902  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

At the Capitol: 1-800-842-8267 (toll free)  
In the District: (203) 234-2240  
E-mail: [steve.fontana@cga.ct.gov](mailto:steve.fontana@cga.ct.gov)

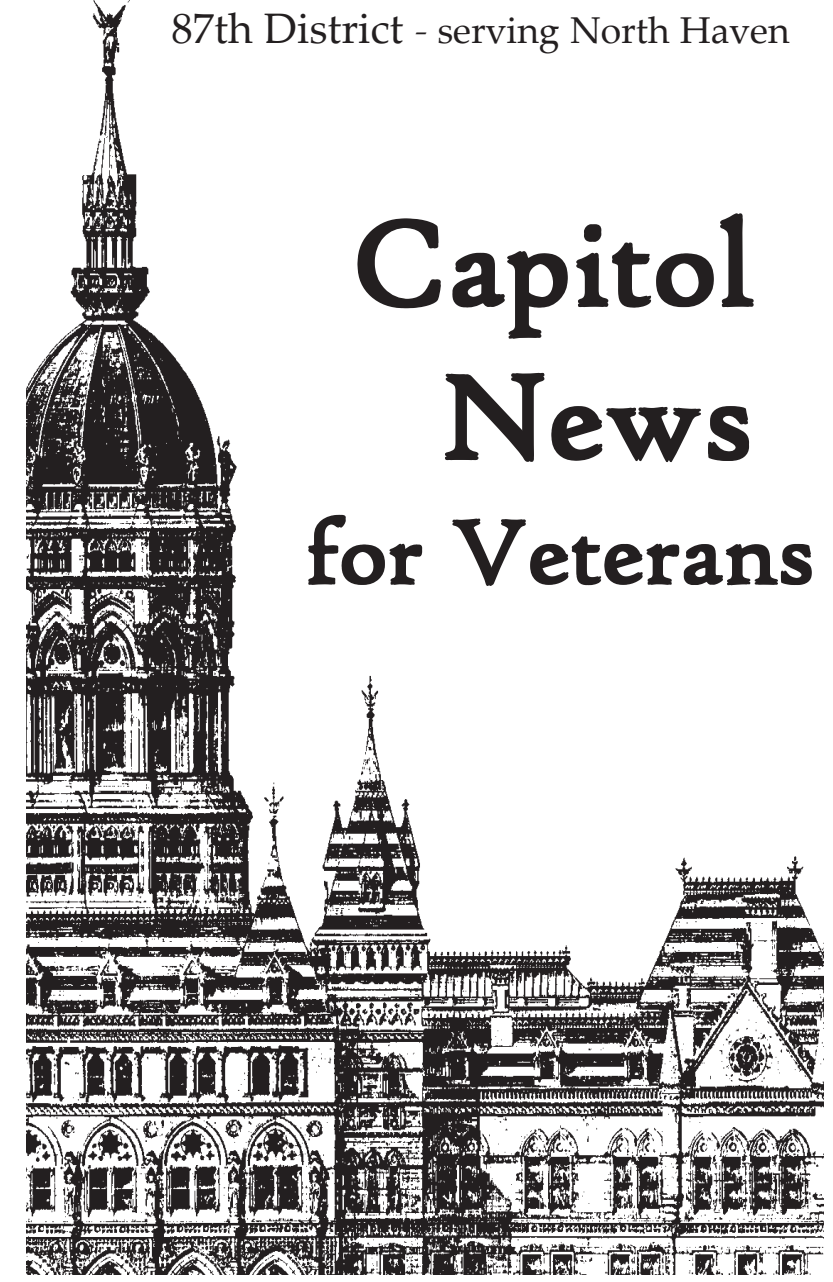


Steve Fontana  
State Representative  
87<sup>th</sup> District

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HARTFORD, CT  
Permit No. 3937

State Representative  
**Steve Fontana**

87th District - serving North Haven



**Capitol  
News  
for Veterans**

# Supporting Our Veterans

## *Toll-free Connection for Benefits and Services*

Now, active duty military personnel, including guardsmen, and their families can call a toll-free number to obtain information about available benefits and referrals to the proper sources for providing benefits and services.



The *toll-free number* is: **1-800-827-1000**.

It will be staffed by employees of the Department of Veterans' Affairs and trained volunteers on weekdays during the regular work hours and on holidays and weekends from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

## *College Tuition Assistance*

*Active members* of the armed forces stationed in Connecticut under military orders, and their spouses, are now eligible for *in-state tuition* at the University of Connecticut, our state universities, and our community-technical colleges.

Eligibility criteria for *college tuition waivers* for *wartime veterans and active members of the Connecticut National Guard* was changed to make domicile, rather than residency, a qualifying criterion. Veterans and guard members no longer have to live in Connecticut for one year to qualify for the tuition waivers.



**Call for your copy of the  
Laws Affecting Veterans  
1-800-842-8267**



## *Lowering of the Flag*

Federal law currently provides that the Governor may proclaim that the national flag be flown at half staff to honor the death of any state or federal government official. Federal law does not specifically mention lowering the national flag to honor fallen veterans, however.

This year, we passed legislation to clearly articulate our state policy whenever the Governor orders the national flag to be lowered in honor of a fallen veteran. It provides a simple, yet honorable, way for the State of Connecticut to pay its respects to fallen members of the military, by giving the Governor the ability to lower both the state and national flags in their memory.



## *Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Exemption*

We passed a law this year to exclude veterans' disability payments when determining income for veterans' income-based property tax exemptions. There are two state-mandated veterans' property tax exemptions: one requires towns to give all qualified applicants a basic \$1,000 property tax exemption; the other requires towns to give veterans who get the basic exemption an additional exemption, based on their income. This legislation excludes the disability payments as a source of income when determining these exemptions.

## *State Income Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Pay*

Starting with the 2008 tax year, 50% of federally taxable military retirement pay will be exempt from our state income tax. The exemption is available for retired members of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and Army and Air National Guard.



## *Service Ribbons and Medals*



The Veterans' Affairs Commissioner, in conjunction with the Adjutant General, is now required to award a ribbon and medal to wartime veterans who lived in Connecticut when they were called to active duty, or are domiciled here on the date of the award.

## *Health Effects of Exposure to Hazardous Materials to be Studied*



In 2005, we established a task force to study the health effects of the exposure to hazardous material, including depleted uranium, as it relates to military service. The task force must: 1) commission a study to consider the health of service members who may have been exposed to hazardous material since August 2, 1990, 2) initiate a health registry for veterans and military personnel returning from countries in which depleted uranium or other hazardous material may be found, 3) develop a plan for outreach and follow-up with military personnel, and 4) prepare a report for service members that includes precautions recommended for the future.