

1 **OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL – OTAG**
2 **TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT**
3 **SERVICES, VETERANS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

4 **BY**

5 **BRIGADIER GENERAL DEBORAH Y. HOWELL**

6 **THE ADJUTANT GENERAL**

7 **VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL GUARD**

8 **23 AUGUST 2016**

9
10 GOOD EVENING SENATOR HARRIGAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON
11 GOVERNMENT SERVICES, VETERANS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS, COMMITTEE
12 MEMBERS PRESENT, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE 31ST LEGISLATURE, STAFF AND
13 THE VIEWING AND LISTENING AUDIENCE. I AM BRIGADIER GENERAL DEBORAH
14 HOWELL, THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AND COMMANDER
15 OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL GUARD. THANK YOU FOR THE INVITATION
16 TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY ON BILL NUMBER 31-
17 0173. I HAVE MY STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE MAJOR MARISE JAMES WITH ME AS
18 THE VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL GUARD IS A BENEFICIARY OF THIS BILL AND IS
19 ATTENDING IN A SUPPORT ROLE.

20 I HAVE REVIEWED BILL NUMBER 31-0173 AND CONSISTENT WITH THE
21 REVIEWER’S NOTE ON PAGE THREE (3) OF THE BILL, THERE IS A CONFLICT IN
22 THE LANGUAGE. I RECOMMEND, IF NOT YET DONE, THE APPROPRIATE
23 AMENDMENT BE SUBMITTED.

24 I FULLY SUPPORT THE CONCEPT PROVIDING STATE BURIAL DEATH
25 BENEFITS. MANY STATE GOVERNMENTS PROVIDE BENEFITS, IN ADDITION TO
26 THOSE EARNED AS A RESULT OF FEDERAL SERVICE, AS A SHOW OF THEIR
27 APPRECIATION TO THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVE IN THE DEFENSE

1 OF OUR GREAT NATION. I AM GRATEFUL THAT THIS BILL RECOGNIZES THE
2 SERVICE OF THE RESERVE COMPONENT FORCES, PARTICULARLY THE NATIONAL
3 GUARD. I MUST ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF MY RESERVE COMRADES, AS I LEND
4 SUPPORT TO ALL VETERANS ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DO HAVE RESERVE UNIT
5 MEMBERS STATIONED IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

6 SERVICE MEMBERS APPRECIATE KNOWING THAT THEIR COMMUNITY
7 RECOGNIZES THEIR SACRIFICE ASSOCIATED WITH SERVING. THIS BILL
8 SYMBOLIZES THE GRATITUDE OF THIS COMMUNITY. I AM DELIGHTED THAT
9 OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE EXPRESSING IN A TANGIBLE WAY THAT THEY
10 VALUE OUR SERVICE MEMBERS AND ACCEPT THAT OUR DUTY TO EXPAND
11 DEMOCRACY OR IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY'S WAY OF LIFE IS NOT
12 FORGOTTEN. HENCE, THIS BILL INCREASES OUR LOCAL BENEFITS AND IS
13 STEADILY PUTTING US ON PAR WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES. I FULLY SUPPORT
14 THE BURIAL BENEFITS PROVIDED IN BILL 31-0173 WITH AMENDMENTS.

15 THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE MY TESTIMONY. I WILL
16 STAND BY FOR ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

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