

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
Department of Pennsylvania**

SEPARATE DEPT OF VET AFFAIRS

June 5, 2008

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, I wish to thank you for granting me the opportunity to address you today on the issue of a separate Department of Veterans Affairs for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

My name is Timothy Dunn and I am a Past State Commander of the Disabled American Veterans and a Past President of the Pennsylvania War Veterans Council. I currently serve as the State Adjutant for the Disabled American Veterans and I am here today representing our 50,000 members

from all over the State of Pennsylvania.

I question if the push for a separate department of veterans affairs is in the best interest of our commonwealths taxpayers and veterans. In regard to this bill that we are discussing today which was spawned by the the October 3, 2007 study that Mr. Ringgolds firm conducted I do agree that some positive suggestions were offered- However a separate department is not one of those suggestions.

On November 2, 2007 a work group met consisting of volunteers (the invitation was made to all members at the State Veterans Commission). This group consisted of members of the major veterans service organizations in the State. Four members of the VFW were in attendance at this meeting. The group did a detailed review of the study and determined that the study was non-conclusive and does not prove a need for a separate department.

Specifically, this study suggests that the new agency would cost over 4.3 million and this does not take into account items like legal, information technology, building vehicle maintenance, building space, utilities, and on and on. It has been estimated that the cost for this new department will be in the 10's of millions just to get it running. I suggest to you that homeless veterans and those who are struggling to feed their families could better use the money than a group of bureaucrats. (Pg 91 in study)-which states that the cost of additional positions for the new dept as being 4,320,499.

The VFW was instrumental in getting SB 915 passed. My good friends and VFW service officer Carmen DeSanti, George Mullens, Commander Getz, and Mr. Sandman all worked diligently on the bill, as well as many others. This is a good bill for veterans. This bill is to provide 2.2 million for Veterans

Service Outreach throughout Pennsylvania. The 2.2 million is not guaranteed - we must fight each year to have funds placed in the budget for this program. As a point of interest the Governor was told by a group of veterans (including VFW members) that if he supported SB 915 that the veterans community would drop their demand for a separate department. Act 66 is a great example of the current group of veterans organizations working together for the good of all veterans. bill was passed in record time as a result of all veterans organizations working together to get the job done.

Lastly, I have worked along side General Wright and her staff for the past three years in making certain that veterans throughout the Commonwealth are well taken care of.

In my professional opinion there is no individual better qualified within this State to advocate for veterans and she and her staff have done that job admirably. I do not

think that Mr. Ringgold or the members of the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council, while willing, are able to fight for veterans in the same manner as General Wright.

I am begging this committee to reach the conclusion that the increased expenses to Pennsylvania taxpayers will not in any major way benefit Pennsylvania veterans by creating a separate Dept of Veterans Affairs.

Thank you! And I will answer any questions that you may have from me.