

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 227, RELATING TO VETERANS

PRESENTATION TO THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, & CULTURE  
AND THE ARTS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

February 16, 2017  
9:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and members of the Committee:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of the concepts of House Bill 227 with comments.

The establishment of a Veterans Conservation Corps may be realized through the support and contributions of State, Federal, County and private non-profit organizations to participate in a study advocated by this bill. Potential benefits could include helping veterans to transition to civilian life by leveraging their leadership experience to meet required conservation needs on public lands. Many existing Veterans Corps programs are private non-profit (501C (3)) entities that were created through a collaborative initiative between existing Corps and Veterans Green Jobs (VGJ) Programs. One example of the basic program model allows for veterans to serve together full-time for ten or more weeks completing conservation projects focused on wildfire prevention and response, recreation enhancement and habitat restoration.

The OVS supports the concepts and intent expressed in this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.



Military Aloha State Transition & Economic Retention Council [ MASTER C ]

Testimony to the House Committee on Health  
Wednesday, February 15, 2017  
State Capitol, Conf. Room 429

**LATE**

RE: HB 227.

To: Chair Rep. Ito, Vice Chair Rep. Tokioka, Rep. Cachola, Rep. Onishi, Rep. Choy,  
Rep. Woodson, Rep. Ward, Rep Ohno.

Thank you Chair Ito, Tokioka, and members for your dedication and service to Veterans. My name is Chase Cappo and I am a resident of Mililani Tech Park at 95-270 Waikalani Dr. Unit J103, Mililani, HI, 96789. I am submitting written testimony in SUPPORT of HB 227.

As an Active Duty U.S. Army Captain, transitioning into a new civilian Resident and Veteran in the Hawaiian community, it is critical to encourage and support endeavors supporting the mission of increased Veteran Retention and integration for the State of Hawaii.

To submit for your additional consideration, our organization's economic modeling shows the following fiscal impacts to the State of Hawaii for every additional Veteran Retained, (not including Veterans with families).

- At least \$144,000 increase in total economic activity annually.
- At least \$9,500 in State Revenue annually.
- GI Bill Federal payout is \$112,000 over 36 months
- Average VA Home Loan is \$544,417.
  - Over 5,000 VA Loans in 2016, approximately \$2.8Billion.

We are currently building logarithms to measure Veterans contribution in increased Labor Productivity and Civic Participation. Military and Veteran Spouses are also a largely untapped labor resource for filling shortcomings in the State's teachers' requirement and health care professionals. For all these reasons and more, my family and the Military Aloha State Transition and Economic Retention Council supports this bill and thanks the Representatives for their service.

---

Retain | Train | Harness | Connect | Hire | Integrate

Kapolei, Hawaii | + 1 808 763 0828 | craig.baldner@peak.hawaii.com; chasescappo@peakhawaii.com

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mike Golojuch	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I definitely support HB227.

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
David Fukuzawa	Individual	Support	No

Aloha Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka and VMI committee members,

My name is Thomas Lee, I served in both the Navy and Army and due to injuries suffered in Iraq in 2007 was honorably/medically retired in 2008. I would like to provide testimony **In Support** of HB 227.

A Veterans Conservation Corps could provide veterans with a structured process for reintegration into the civilian workforce while also providing specific training in conservation that would supplement the strong attributes a Military Service Member gains during military service.

Transition out of military service is different for everyone, for some it is easy but for others it can be difficult. Facilitating programs like this that allow for a more structured transition while providing job skill / new career training could greatly assist not only the veterans who participate but also to the State and community through the conservation work performed and professionalism of veterans in the workforce.

This type of opportunity may not only help Hawai'i retain valued service members transitioning out of service but could also recruit transitioning service members with Hawai'i roots to come back home to Hawai'i.

There are programs with similar attributes throughout the Continental U.S.:

Virginia - <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/ameri-corps>

Washington State - <http://www.dva.wa.gov/benefits/veterans-conservation-corps-vetcorps>

California - <http://www.ccc.ca.gov/join/VeteranOpps/Pages/VeteranOpps.aspx>

I'd like to thank this committee and the legislature for looking for ways to give back to our State's Veteran Community and maybe even bring some home to Hawai'i.

Respectfully,

Thomas Lee (Army Ret.)



**LATE**

To:

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, & CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Rep. Ken Ito, Chair

Rep. James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair

Rep. Romy M. Cachola      Rep. Richard H.K. Onishi  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy        Rep. Justin H. Woodson  
Rep. Takashi Ohno        Rep. Gene Ward

Subject:                      **HB227- Relating to Veterans**

Hearing:                      DATE:      Thursday, February 16, 2017  
   TIME:      9:30 a.m.  
   PLACE:     Conference Room 429  
                  State Capitol  
                  415 South Beretania Street

My name is Marlee Kealoha and I'm a Social Work Graduate Student at UH Manoa. I'm testifying in support of HB 227 relating to Veterans. Requires the Office of Veterans' Services in the Department of Defense to study the establishment and administration of a veterans conservation corps program to assist veterans in obtaining training, certification, and employment in the areas of environmental protection, restoration, and management.

Veterans that are release from their military duty have experience, expertise and skills that could be an asset to jobs that are in environmental, restoration and management. If they receive the training and certification for these job positions they can contribute to the protection and restoration of the environment. If veterans can utilize the skills, they already have then they can build upon those skills and use them productively in their civilian life. Creating and establishing this conservation corp can benefit both the environment and Veterans

The Veteran population has high rates of mental health conditions that include post-traumatic stress disorder(PTSD), aggressive behaviors and emotional issues. The most common way that mental health conditions are dealt with is through prescription medications. Studies

have shown that being able to work in the environment and land can help decrease symptoms of PTSD and help with recovery. This can benefit Veterans in a healthy and natural way and lead to an active lifestyle. There are outdoors programs geared towards using outdoor activities as therapeutic and improve their quality of life.

Veterans being able to utilize their expertise, experience and skills while potentially recovering from mental health conditions is an asset. Establishing a veterans conservation corp program can be prosperous for the environment and for veterans. Protecting and restoring the environment while Veterans gain a job and be in recovery from mental health conditions is a benefit. This study and its findings could contribute to ways that can help veterans recover from mental health conditions without the use of medication

Thank you for reading my testimony and hope that this could lead to veterans using and utilizing their skills in productive ways that can protect and restore the environment. At the same time improving their quality of life and recovery from mental health conditions.

Marlee Kealoha  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
808-754-0065