

1 BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE
2 STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, HOMELAND SECURITY, AND
3 MILITARY AFFAIRS

4 -----

5 PUBLIC HEARING

6 TO DISCUSS THE NEW YORK JOBS FOR HEROES PROGRAM

7 (S. 2803-B)

8 -----

9 Legislative Office Building
10 181 State Street
11 Room 711-A, 7th Floor
12 Albany, New York 12247

13 February 10, 2014
14 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

15 PRESIDING:

16 Senator Greg Ball
17 Chair

18 Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (RM)
19 Co-Chair

20 PRESENT:

21 Senator Terry Gipson

22 Assemblyman Felix Ortiz
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SPEAKERS:

PAGE QUESTIONS

First Lieutenant Carolyn Hulse
Veteran

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Drexel Hamilton Equity Trading
(Current Employee/Intern)

Second Lieutenant James M. Terhune
Veteran

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T&T Materials, Inc., President & CEO

Sergeant Daniel Morales
Veteran

17

Drexel Hamilton Equity Trading
(Current Employee)

Sergeant Bill Nelson
Veteran

20

Former CEO of HBO

Sergeant Joseph Krulder II
Veteran

24

Drexel Hamilton Equity Trading,
Assistant Vice President

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1 SENATOR BALL: We're a little late, sorry for
2 that.

3 Feel free to take your seats.

4 We will be -- flexibility is the key to air
5 power, at least that's what they tell you at the
6 Air Force Academy.

7 So, we will be somewhat flexible.

8 But I want you to thank -- and just so you
9 know, of course, we're in budget time now, so people
10 are going to be coming in and out; we have senators
11 that will be coming in and out.

12 It's not that we're being rude. It's just
13 that, very intense schedules of dozens of events
14 today.

15 So, I want to thank our colleague over on the
16 other side, Assemblyman Ortiz, who is actually
17 sponsoring this legislation in the Assembly, and
18 really has been doing the hero's work of getting
19 this through the Assembly with nearly 60 co-sponsors
20 now.

21 And then our Co-Chair, Ranker, on the
22 Senate side, Senator Addabbo, who has been an
23 awesome friend, not only to the veterans, but
24 myself, which is tough to find.

25 I got a dog when I first came, so now I have

1 two friends.

2 And, Senator Gipson, who we actually share
3 half a county.

4 I don't know how that redistricting thing,
5 how that worked, but, Senator Gipson, thank you for
6 being here.

7 Without further ado, because know we're
8 behind, unless you guys want to do something else,
9 I'd like to have, Carolyn, first lieutenant, all the
10 way from Texas.

11 We hear a lot about people moving from
12 New York to Texas.

13 This is a Texan that moved to New York.

14 Hey, Carolyn, how are you?

15 CAROLYN HULSE: Good afternoon. Thank you
16 for having me here.

17 I was active duty in the Air Force for a
18 total of 12 years. And, I was enlisted for 7 years,
19 went over to the Gulf War. We were the first
20 hospital to set up in theater.

21 And then I got out and used my GI Bill to
22 earn my of master's degree, and came back in as a
23 first lieutenant, and served five more years, and
24 got out as a captain; whereas, I'm commissioned as a
25 captain, as a hospital administrator.

1 I have a 70 percent service-connected
2 disability rating. Part of that is from PTSD and
3 other injuries that I sustained while I was on
4 active duty.

5 So, I want to thank you all for having me
6 here today. It's truly an honor.

7 And I did move up here. Actually, I arrived
8 on Christmas Eve, and -- to start my new venture and
9 make a career change.

10 I worked in health care for 28 years, and was
11 laid off just over a year ago.

12 And it was actually a blessing in disguise,
13 because my mother was diagnosed with cancer. I was
14 able to live with her and take care of her until she
15 passed away.

16 The president of our company flew me up to
17 New York and interviewed me, and I told him my
18 story, and told him I want to work hard.

19 You know, like I said, I've been laid off for
20 a year, but like I said, it was a blessing in
21 disguise, to help care for my mother, and take care
22 of things.

23 And the president of our company has a heart
24 of gold, and he hired me on. And, I started up here
25 in early January, as an intern. So, I'm still

1 studying for my Series 7.

2 And the financial-services industry is a
3 career change for me, but they've been very patient.

4 We have well-seasoned Wall Street veterans
5 there. Very nice, humble people that are training
6 us, taking us under their wing, and training the
7 future of the financial-services industry.

8 And all I have to say, after working in
9 health care, I work with some very, very
10 professional men and women there; mostly men.

11 But, they're very professional, very
12 respectful. They're smart.

13 And like I said, the president of the company
14 really saved my life.

15 So, I just wanted to thank everyone for being
16 here.

17 And thank you, for all our veterans here,
18 war-wounded or not, thank you for your service.

19 I can truly appreciate it.

20 My dad was a World War II vet.

21 SENATOR BALL: Thank you, Carolyn.

22 [Applause.]

23 SENATOR BALL: Any questions?

24 SENATOR ADDABBO, JR.: First and foremost,
25 thank you so much, once again, to see you here.

1 Thank you.

2 And to all servicemen and -women, to all
3 veterans, thank you so much for your commitment and
4 dedication to our country.

5 Just on the bill, because I'm a little
6 frustrated why this bill doesn't move.

7 And I got to thank, you know, our Chair here,
8 Senator Ball, for his tenacity about, and his
9 persistence about, this bill.

10 But it's a little frustrating on our end, why
11 this bill doesn't go forward.

12 Do you foresee any problems -- I don't -- do
13 you foresee any problems with this bill, as far as
14 implementation?

15 I mean, we do know it has no cost to the
16 state. Actually, it's going to be, fiscally,
17 beneficial.

18 CAROLYN HULSE: Uh-huh. Absolutely.

19 SENATOR ADDABBO, JR.: Do you see any
20 problems with this bill, as far as implementation?

21 CAROLYN HULSE: I would think it would be a
22 positive, absolutely, to support the economy of
23 New York, and also support the veterans.

24 But implementing it, to the point where we
25 are right now, I think the implementation is the

1 easy part.

2 I think it would be -- and I don't -- and
3 I don't say that with a grain of salt.

4 "Easy" being, just implement it, let's move
5 it through, because it will move. It will pick up
6 its own momentum and it will move.

7 Like I said, the veterans, having the
8 veteran-owned, and especially the service-connected
9 disabled-veteran-owned businesses, will greatly
10 prosper New York.

11 And, we really want New York be a
12 veteran-friendly state.

13 Texas is a very veteran-friendly state.

14 I saved a lot of taxes when I was a
15 homeowner.

16 I could park free at the airport. Hey,
17 that's \$20 a day.

18 So, you know, lots and lots of perks.

19 My son is actually going to college now,
20 using my Hazlewood Act. It pays for all of his
21 college tuition.

22 So there are a lot of things, that, we really
23 want New York to support our veterans and our
24 service-connected disabled veterans.

25 And this bill would help support them their

1 families.

2 And like I said a few minutes ago, we're
3 hard-working, we have high integrity. We'll show up
4 to work, we'll work as many hours as we need to do.

5 And, as an Air Force, flexibility is the key
6 to air power. But, also, another mantra we would
7 use is, "Whatever it takes."

8 We will do whatever it takes.

9 So, whenever I would ask, when I was a
10 hospital administrator, I'd ask any of my staff:
11 The surgery is going to run another hour or two.
12 Would you mind working, you know, until 6 p.m.?

13 And instead of getting an eye roll, like,
14 "Really?" if I asked any of my veterans, they'll be,
15 like, <snaps fingers> "I'll be right there, not a
16 problem."

17 We don't watch the clock. We do whatever it
18 takes.

19 So, I think this bill would -- the
20 implementation shouldn't be a factor, because
21 I think if the veterans are afforded this
22 opportunity, they're going to take it and go with
23 it, and they're going to do us proud.

24 SENATOR BALL: And we've seen the success
25 with the minority-, women-owned, program; the vast

1 success under this Governor's leadership to over
2 20 percent of the State contracts.

3 This program has been rolled out specifically
4 at the federal level, and then 44 other states where
5 there haven't been any complications.

6 And we have over 72,000 disabled vets in
7 New York State, so, this, it's a big deal.

8 Well, Carolyn, thank you very much.

9 CAROLYN HULSE: Thank you.

10 ASSEMBLYMAN ORTIZ: And thank you for serving
11 our country.

12 [Applause.]

13 SENATOR BALL: Jim? You ready?

14 Just a little bit about James. I'll read it
15 from the bio hearing.

16 "Enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1972.

17 "Served until his honorable discharge in
18 1977.

19 "Continues military service in the New York
20 Army National Guard, from '77 to '80, and then
21 reenlisted in 2001 with the Army National Guard."

22 James.

23 JAMES M. TERHUNE: And another five years,
24 then, I went through OCS.

25 My condition, when I was 51, I think I was

1 the oldest second lieutenant in the military at the
2 time. Pretty funny.

3 I wish I was still there, but, I can't do it
4 anymore.

5 So, I've got five minutes, and this stuff's
6 all important; so, if you don't mind my reading it?

7 SENATOR BALL: Yep.

8 JAMES M. TERHUNE: Okay.

9 Well, Chairman --

10 SENATOR BALL: I actually hate reading,
11 but --

12 JAMES M. TERHUNE: You'll see it. Most of
13 it, I'll just cut through. I tend to wing it
14 anyhow. It's the old Army, I guess.

15 But, Chairman Ball, members of the
16 Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security, and
17 Military Affairs, and my fellow veterans: Good
18 afternoon.

19 My name is Jim Terhune.

20 I founded T&T Materials in 2006, and I serve
21 as the president and the CEO.

22 I am a service-disabled veteran, and my
23 company carries that designation.

24 Now, I'd just like to tell you quickly what
25 we do.

1 T&T Materials is a successful metal supplier
2 to the U.S. Military.

3 When the Army was short of armor plate back
4 in the Iraq War, we would be the ones they'd look
5 for, to send it in, to build the machine-gunnings'
6 kits, and save our soldiers' lives.

7 We're approved through 12 different military
8 organizations as suppliers, through IDIQs and BAEs.

9 And, we are a STAR Supplier Award recipient
10 with Lockheed Martin, the only one in our
11 designation that has received that award.

12 So my point is, we've been doing this for
13 eight years and we're very good at it, but in the
14 past eight years, I haven't had one order through
15 New York State in a procurement area, even though
16 we've tried.

17 And, I've discussed it with other
18 veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned
19 companies and they've had the same problems, which
20 is the reason that I'm here today and that I showed
21 up.

22 What I'd like to do now is just talk about
23 those three Senate bills, and the benefits to
24 veterans-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned
25 small businesses.

1 So, for those that don't know, the 2803-B
2 seeks to establish a modest set-aside for
3 state-agency purchases that will be awarded to
4 service-disabled and veteran-owned small businesses.

5 Now, that is a successful practice that's
6 already been implemented by well over 40 states and
7 the federal government.

8 I think California was one of the first ones,
9 and they, 20 years, probably, have been doing it,
10 and they're doing a heck of a job.

11 So those that argue what's the appropriate
12 set-aside percentage or debate the fairness in a
13 free-market economy completely miss the point.

14 By implementing and enforcing a finite and
15 measurable target for a percentage of purchase
16 contracts to be awarded to veteran- and
17 service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, you
18 will motivate the state agencies to reach out to
19 those businesses; and, therefore, move out of their
20 comfort zones of working with those large incumbent
21 organizations.

22 I can assure you, being in the government
23 arena, that those set-asides don't guarantee any
24 company any business, but if enacted, they'll simply
25 level the playing field for our veteran-owned small

1 businesses.

2 And then, on the other hand, for those that
3 embrace and support the advocacy ineffectiveness of
4 set-asides for government purchases for women-owned,
5 minority-owned, I would ask: Are those who have
6 borne the burden of defending our rights and
7 liberties, those that have put themselves in harm's
8 way, and, for some, endured lifelong injury and
9 disability, are those heros any less deserving of
10 consideration from this state government?

11 And I think we would all agree here, they are
12 not.

13 So, Senate Bill 3038-A is a good one, too,
14 which is going to help veteran-owned small
15 businesses overcome the insurmountable advantage of
16 those large corporate entities which I think
17 artificially lower the competitive-pricing
18 threshold, effectively, shutting out the
19 service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses,
20 which is what I think has happened to me.

21 In my industry, too often, a government
22 contract's awarded at a price point that translates
23 to zero profitability for the bidding corporation.

24 That predatory business strategy employed
25 there is to win the lead contract, and by so doing

1 so, become the favored supplier for all similar
2 products and services, freezing out your
3 competition.

4 I don't think -- I think this new Senate bill
5 will overcome that.

6 The competitive indexing for the fair
7 evaluation of bids that will be enacted by that
8 legislation will mitigate the staggering advantage
9 of large established corporations.

10 And I think there was a 15 percent preference
11 for veteran -- service-disabled veteran-owned, and
12 10 percent for veteran-owned.

13 And I think including the veteran-owned in
14 all of this is as important.

15 The last one, this one is beyond me: Tax
16 credits to companies that hire veterans.

17 From my perspective, it seems almost
18 unnecessary to present a justification for what
19 should be an obvious and non-debatable remedy.

20 An unemployment rate of 20 percent of the
21 employable veteran population is, at best,
22 unacceptable; and, at worse, shameful.

23 And it's -- an even worse strategy --
24 tragedy, I'm sorry, because it's compounded by the
25 labor statistics that show that the rate is even

1 more severe for the younger veterans who have
2 recently returned from the conflicts in Iran and
3 Afghanistan.

4 The noble men and women who answer our
5 nation's call to duty and who fought bravely against
6 the enemies of our republic now find themselves
7 marking time on unemployment.

8 Those soldiers don't want a government
9 handout, but they deserve a hand-up.

10 So as I conclude my remarks, I just want to
11 thank Senator Ball.

12 I probably talked too much and read, and he
13 took off, so, and I understand that.

14 [Laughter.]

15 I tend to talk too much, usually.

16 But as I reflect on the possible impacts of
17 that trio of legislation -- legislative initiatives
18 that he's got in front of us, I'm reminded of a line
19 from a speech given by President Kennedy for a
20 Veteran's Day event.

21 And he said, "As we express our gratitude to
22 our veterans, we must never forget that the highest
23 appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by
24 them."

25 So, finally, the economic challenges facing

1 our veterans, both as entrepreneurs and as
2 job-seekers, are formidable and well-documented.

3 How you, the elected servants of the people
4 of this state respond will be measured, not by the
5 eloquence of your words, but by the courage of your
6 actions.

7 And that's it.

8 SENATOR ADDABBO, JR.: Good job.

9 [Applause.]

10 SENATOR ADDABBO, JR.: Thank you.

11 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Mr. Morales.

12 SENATOR ADDABBO, JR.: Daniel Morales.

13 And while he approaches, I'll mention, that:
14 Daniel Morales joined Drexel Hamilton Equity
15 Trading on January 1, 2013.

16 Prior to joining Drexel, he served as the
17 field radio operator for the 2nd Battalion,
18 25th Marine Regiment, H&S Company Communications
19 Platoon.

20 In addition, he served as the field radio
21 operator for the Sniper Platoon.

22 DANIEL MORALES: Good afternoon, ladies and
23 gentlemen.

24 I'd like to begin, first, by thanking my
25 fellow veterans here. Your presence and your voice

1 is crucially important, as unemployment itself is a
2 battlefield.

3 And many of you men and women who are here
4 have retired; and, yet, here you are, continuing to
5 fight the good fight on the battlefield so that
6 veterans like myself returning from the wars in Iraq
7 and Afghanistan can come home and build the life.

8 I'd like to further extend the gratitude to
9 Senators present, Assemblyman Ortiz, for giving us
10 the opportunity to speak on a very important issue.

11 I work for a firm called Drexel Hamilton,
12 with my colleagues, Joseph and Carolyn.

13 And, we are a disabled-veteran
14 owned-and-managed institutional broker-dealer firm.

15 What we do is, we take returning veterans
16 from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and we train
17 them, and provide them with the opportunity to find
18 meaningful employment in the finance industry.

19 We pair our Wall Street veteran with a
20 military veteran, so on and so forth; get them
21 battle-ready, and send them off to a meaningful
22 career.

23 We are, literally, in the front lines of this
24 battle that is plaguing our veterans: this
25 unemployment situation here.

1 But our efforts, in the greater picture,
2 is -- it feels insignificant.

3 It isn't, but it feels that way.

4 But with a bill like the bill you guys are
5 putting forth today, it allows institutions, as
6 Drexel Hamilton, and other veteran-owned small
7 businesses, to reach back and continue hiring
8 veterans.

9 As has been said more than once here today,
10 one of the best things that veteran-owned companies
11 do, is hiring more veterans. We take care of our
12 own.

13 And that is, ultimately, the reason why we
14 are having this discussion today.

15 This bill, in its very essence, will echo
16 through the generations.

17 It will reach back to the veterans of the
18 wars of yesterday, those who have established small
19 businesses, and say, We recognize and appreciate
20 your sacrifices and contributions, and this is one
21 way we're going to show it.

22 And it tells the veterans returning from the
23 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan today, the same thing:
24 We appreciate you raising a hand and volunteering,
25 and, we're going to take care of you.

1 And most importantly, it will reach further
2 into the future and tell the veterans of tomorrow:
3 That this is how we take care of our own. This is
4 how we say "thank you" to our men and women who put
5 themselves on that front line, risking, and those
6 who sacrifice.

7 I thank you all for your time today, and I'd
8 love to take any questions if there are any.

9 SENATOR BALL: Thank you.

10 Any questions here?

11 Awesome.

12 Thank you for your time.

13 [Applause.]

14 SENATOR BALL: Next we've got, Bill Nelson.

15 Bill is a combat vet from Vietnam. Served
16 with the U.S. Army's 2nd 502 Strike Force Infantry
17 Regiment of the 101st Airborne.

18 He is the former chairman and CEO of HBO.

19 And, he also happens to live in my district,
20 so I better not mess up.

21 He'll be running against me.

22 [Laughter.]

23 SENATOR BALL: Colin, I think we have a name,
24 by the way.

25 Where's Colin?

1 BILL NELSON: First let me say, it's a
2 privilege for me to be here, and to lend support, to
3 join all the other veterans in this room, and all
4 the other veterans across this state who couldn't be
5 here, to speak out in support of this very important
6 legislation.

7 I want to commend Senator Ball,
8 Assemblyman Ortiz, Senator Addabbo, and
9 Senator Gipson, and all of your colleagues in both
10 the Assembly and the Senate who support, along with
11 you, this legislation.

12 I'm here simply because I'm a Vietnam
13 veteran, and I've seen that there are other Vietnam
14 veterans in this room.

15 And what we believe in, what our motto is,
16 with the founding principle of Vietnam Veterans of
17 America, is: Is never again will one generation of
18 veterans abandon another.

19 That's why many of us are here.

20 [Applause.]

21 DANIEL MORALES: As I said to someone
22 earlier, in the hallway: We don't only talk the
23 talk, we walk the walk.

24 And, I was very happy to hear, therefore,
25 that the federal government and 44 states -- that's

1 almost 90 percent of the United States -- passed
2 similar legislation, with a contract preference for
3 service-disabled veterans and those with small
4 businesses.

5 And as a lifelong citizen of New York State,
6 I was stunned when I found out that New York was one
7 of the six who hadn't passed this legislation.

8 And I say that especially so.

9 I was in Manhattan when 9/11 happened. Maybe
10 many of you were as well.

11 But the thing that most impressed me, not
12 only the first responders and the whole community
13 and whole state, but those men and women who stepped
14 forward because of that attack, raised their right
15 hand, as Senator Ball has said today many times, to
16 go into harm's way, to risk their lives, to leave
17 their families, to make sure that this country would
18 be secure, to make sure that New York City and
19 New York State would be secure.

20 Those are the people, and many of them are
21 right here, who went on the battlefields of Iraq and
22 Afghanistan, got shot up, seeing their buddies die,
23 lost limbs, lost eyesight. I said before, traumatic
24 brain injury, PTSD, down the list.

25 "Down the list."

1 This State called on those people -- and not
2 very many of them who were able to accomplish that,
3 another point -- they went into harm's way. They
4 accomplished extraordinary things in mostly
5 hellacious circumstances.

6 And born of that extraordinary selfless
7 sacrifice comes an extraordinary obligation on the
8 citizens of this state; and more importantly, those
9 elected officials, elected officials of this state,
10 to pass this legislation.

11 What are we saying to these veterans, what
12 are we saying to future veterans, if this bill
13 doesn't pass?

14 I'd like to actually sit in a hearing like
15 this and have the people, whoever they are, those
16 elected officials who do not support this bill.

17 I think it's incumbent upon them to defend
18 themselves, because this is nothing more than a
19 moral obligation and a patriotic obligation for this
20 state.

21 So those who don't support it, I think have
22 an obligation to come forward with the microphone
23 and their lips over it, saying why they don't
24 support it.

25 And I actually would say, maybe that's

1 something that should happen with all the cameras
2 across this good state and all the citizens
3 listening in, because I cannot believe the majority
4 of citizens in New York State, if they were fully
5 informed about what this bill is, and there are some
6 that oppose it, that those people would be
7 re-elected in the spots that they currently sit in.

8 I'm going to close by saying this, and I said
9 it before:

10 We are defined by what we do and what we
11 don't do.

12 What we do and what we don't do, in equal
13 measure.

14 I actually think it's quite simple: That
15 this group of elected officials know what the right
16 thing to do is, and I think they should and must
17 make this legislation part of their legacy in
18 August.

19 Thank you.

20 SENATOR BALL: Thank you, Bill. God bless.

21 [Applause.]

22 SENATOR BALL: Thank you.

23 ASSEMBLYMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

24 SENATOR BALL: Joe.

25 JOSEPH KRULDER II: Good afternoon,

1 gentlemen.

2 My name is Joseph Krulder. I am the
3 assistant vice president of Drexel Hamilton.

4 We are a service-disabled
5 veteran-owned-and-operated institutional
6 broker-dealer, as Danny Morales and Carolyn Hulse,
7 my cohorts, have described in the past.

8 I'm also the nephew of the gentleman sitting
9 right behind the Senator, who is also vice commander
10 of the National DAV, my proud uncle, Dennis Krulder.

11 [Applause.]

12 JOSEPH KRULDER II: I've had a very long day.

13 And the Senator and Assemblyman, and many of
14 their leaders, have had a very long couple of
15 sessions, trying to fight for something that is, in
16 the words of my brother-in-arms, 101st Airborne
17 Division partner in crime, "Something that's just
18 morally right, obligated by our citizenry."

19 There's not much I have to say about what
20 this bill shouldn't pass for.

21 Here's why I guarantee you it should:

22 Drexel Hamilton is founded on the premise
23 that we reach back and we hire more men and women,
24 "veterans," period.

25 If you're a veteran and you come home, you

1 come home to the highest unemployment rate this
2 country's seen in decades. You come home to the
3 highest underemployment rate that this country's
4 seen in decades. You come home, after serving 4, 5,
5 6, 11 tours of duty.

6 I put to anybody: How many people can hold a
7 job steady in a career, that's been deployed more
8 than twice in a four-year period?

9 There's a lot of laws out there that say you
10 can't fire you.

11 You go out, and -- I promise you, I know
12 personally, men and women that have been released
13 from their service to their businesses because they,
14 frankly, can't be there.

15 Why? Because their country, and this state,
16 says, We need you somewhere of higher importance.

17 That's our obligation, gentlemen. You know
18 that.

19 I'm preaching to the choir when I talk to you
20 guys, because I know you're here because you believe
21 in the same thing I do.

22 You believe in the same thing every single
23 man and woman in this room believes in: That we
24 fought for our country. Some of us died for our
25 country. And some live with the lasting impression,

1 that they'll never let go of certain things, for
2 this country.

3 I'm one of those men.

4 At the 101st Airborne Division, I probably
5 wear my pin and my CIB that Mr. Nelson honored me
6 today with.

7 When you're pinned to CIB, it means that you
8 were in direct combat and you returned that combat
9 fire. You fought the fight.

10 Being pinned a CIB means that you've done
11 something at a higher level and have been asked to
12 do something great.

13 I'm asking each one of you to go back to your
14 fellow constituents, your Assemblymen and your
15 Senators, both sides of the party. This is not a --
16 this is so far from being a political issue, it's a
17 little ridiculous.

18 This is an issue of honor and integrity.

19 The same things that you're elected under.

20 It's the issue of each one of us, to go back
21 and say: Listen, let's pin a badge of honor on each
22 one of us, because our constituents [inaudible]
23 would say, We need to make sure that the men and
24 women that come home don't get a promise. They
25 receive that 5 percent guaranteed set-aside, so that

1 they can perform that dream that they fought for,
2 that you and I currently continue to have; and
3 that's meaningful employment, meaningful opportunity
4 to create business, and meaningful opportunity to
5 stand in front of their wives or husbands and their
6 children and feel honor again.

7 Because I promise you, I was there once,
8 gentlemen. I was one of those men that was in a
9 very deep dark hole.

10 Now, I might not look it.

11 I might sound very eloquent and a little
12 savvy, but my wife and my children suffered for
13 years, because of the pains that I had on the
14 inside, the things that I had to deal with.

15 And the fact that, as an educated man,
16 I couldn't even find a job. And I was like, Oh, my
17 God, I'm an educated man. What you are talking
18 about?

19 Well, because education has nothing to do
20 with it.

21 Unemployment is unemployment.

22 No jobs are no jobs.

23 This bill will make a significant dent in the
24 state of New York, on making sure just one extra
25 veteran, one extra disabled veteran, can afford to

1 take care of his family or her family.

2 That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

3 [Laughter.]

4 [Applause.]

5 SENATOR BALL: Any questions?

6 Okay.

7 Well, gentlemen, I want to thank you.

8 And I guess, do we want to close?

9 ASSEMBLYMAN ORTIZ: Yep.

10 JOSEPH KRULDER II: Thank you, gentlemen.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN ORTIZ: I would like to, if you
12 mind, I would like to really thank all of you who
13 are here.

14 For those of you who are here for the first
15 time and don't know me, I used to be the Chair of
16 the Veteran Affairs Committee, about six years ago.
17 And I'm also a former Army person. I served in the
18 Army many years ago.

19 SENATOR BALL: All right. Yeah.

20 [Applause.]

21 ASSEMBLYMAN ORTIZ: And I have a history, a
22 family member who has served throughout different
23 ranks of the military; by the way, including the
24 Coast Guard, and which I do believe that we also
25 have to include to be part of this.

1 And I would like just to really thank the
2 Senator for bringing more light into this issue.

3 I will say this publicly, I never said this
4 before to him:

5 I will say that this Senator, not only he has
6 it in his heart and in his blood, but this is, he
7 has become to be the real champion and the real hero
8 of this issue for us all. Not just for you, but
9 also, for me, for my son who served in Iraq.

10 And I do also share your pain about
11 unemployment, because when I came from the military,
12 I was told that I will go back to my job because
13 I took a absent -- a military absence.

14 And, all of a sudden, was not a job there
15 available for me.

16 And then I have to bring three more lawyers
17 to fight for me, to ensure that my job get back to
18 me.

19 And I got the job back, by the way, after
20 that.

21 But, the bottom line is, we sometimes get
22 told things that is on the rules, it's part of the
23 rules of our law. And, all of a sudden, people
24 believe that they can get away with it.

25 And I would like to finalize by saying this:

1 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to
2 have this bill, together with the Senator, and to
3 serve my brothers and sisters from the armed forces
4 from a different capacity, where we know both can
5 make a big difference.

6 And I hope that the -- as the Governor stated
7 today to some of us, that the 2014 will be that
8 shining star. That we will see the light at the end
9 of the tunnel, that this bill become to be reality.

10 Thank you for the opportunity that you have
11 given us.

12 [Applause.]

13 SENATOR BALL: Senator Gipson?
14 Senator Addabbo?

15 SENATOR GIPSON: Go ahead.

16 SENATOR ADDABBO, JR.: No.

17 SENATOR BALL: Well, I want to thank
18 everybody.

19 First, I want to thank my staff. Putting
20 this together is not easy.

21 Thank you.

22 [Applause.]

23 SENATOR BALL: I kind have high expectations,
24 and today they were met; so, thank you.

25 But, there's a lot more that still needs to

1 be done.

2 You know, when we think about something like
3 this, it really is a moral obligation. It should be
4 considered a moral obligation.

5 I'm sorry, as an elected official, that we
6 have to work so hard, that we force you guys to work
7 so hard, to do something. That, this should have
8 been done a long, long time ago.

9 But when we think about both veterans'
10 unemployment and veteran suicide, this bill will
11 allow service-disabled veteran-owned businesses to
12 taps into hundreds of millions of dollars in
13 contracts. They, in turn, will hire veterans,
14 taking them off the unemployment line.

15 And we all have friends that have succumbed
16 to suicide after service, and there's no doubt that
17 many of them, with meaningful employment, never
18 would have taken their own lives.

19 This bill isn't just about jobs. It's going
20 to save lives.

21 And we're doing God's work.

22 And I thank Felix for his continued
23 leadership. The go-to guy on veterans affairs if
24 you want to get something done in the New York State
25 Assembly.

1 I thank each and every one of you.

2 And, certainly, Senator Addabbo and
3 Senator Gipson, for showing up here for this hearing
4 today.

5 [Applause.]

6 (Whereupon, at approximately 1:33 p.m.,
7 the public hearing held before the New York State
8 Senate Standing Committee on Veterans,
9 Homeland Security, and Military Affairs concluded,
10 and adjourned.)

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