

Burke, Robert

From: sarah albrycht <salbrycht@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 1:30 PM
To: Burke, Robert
Subject: Active duty Vermonter who wishes to retire here

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Robert,

I hear you spoke to my cousin Katie Franco today about legislation about veteran's pensions. I am an Active Duty Service member married to a retired service member. I was born and raised in Bennington, VT. Since college graduation I have been in the military. It has always been my dream to come home to Vermont after I left the military. I have served for nearly 25 years and my husband served for 23. Vermont is not just my home, it has long been a haven of sorts. The place that, no matter where I went in the world, would welcome me home. I am at least a 5th, if not 6th generation Vermonter (Dermody/Scully). Although my husband is from New Jersey, his great grandfather left the marble cutting trade in Como, Italy in the late 1800s to work in Barre and married a local farming family (The Keltons). Both of our families have wandered to and from Vermont over the years, in search of opportunity, following family, and often following the drum of the military. But Vermont always calls us home.

That siren song is very appealing. We love the lifestyle so unique to Vermont. We want to raise our Kindergartener there, teach her to ski on her slopes we got married on, hike her mountains, and live her values. We want to contribute to an involved community that serves its people, just as her people serve it. But following that siren song comes with a cost. Vermont is the only one of her surrounding states that taxes military retirement. We can literally live just over the border in NY, and save a significant portion of our income. My husband is a 100% disabled veteran, but not from combat wounds (He can and will get care through the VA and its network, which we believe Vermont can support.) We have been watching the debate for years on the taxation of military retirement in the hopes that our decision will become easier, that Vermont will find a way. We do understand the fiscal pressures on a small state. There are more ways that we would bring revenue than pure income taxation. As a dual professional family still in our 40s with a young daughter, we believe we represent a positive benefit to the state. Military retirement income not spent on tax does not mean income not invested in our community and our state.

I firmly believe that many in the military would choose to call Vermont home, if only the taxation issue was addressed. I have watched Vermont offer a \$10K payment for working people, totally unassociated to Vermont, to move into the state. I believe our retired military (including those like me who have always called Vermont home) should have access to some kind of tax waiver to incentivize investing their future in Vermont. Study after study has shown veterans are highly invested in their communities, volunteer in higher rates, and serve in elected positions. Vermont has consistently proven itself to be welcoming to new populations. It is time we opened our arms to those who have honorably served our nation so that they too can continue to serve in our brave little state.

I've attached a link to a State Benefit Finder created by the Center for New American Security (**a place I currently am a fellow) that can easily assist a perspective Vermonter who is a Veteran, in comparing Vermont benefits vs. those avail in NY, NH, MA for example.

<https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/state-veteran-benefit-finder>

Here is the report:

<https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/from-sea-to-shining-sea>

My views are my personal opinion and do not reflect the views of CNAS, the U.S. Army, or the United States Military.

Thank you for your efforts,

