

**Colonel (Dr.) August T. Murray, U.S. Army, Retired**

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**April 30, 2025**

**To:**

House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs  
Vermont State House  
Montpelier, VT

Senate Committee on Government Operations  
Vermont State House  
Montpelier, VT

**Subject: Testimony on Policy Issues Relating to Veterans Affairs in Vermont**

Dear Members of the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations and Military Affairs,

My name is Colonel (Dr.) August T. Murray, U.S. Army, Retired. I write to you today not only as a Veteran, but as a Vermonter who made the deliberate and heartfelt decision to return home after 33 years of service in the United States Armed Forces.

I joined the military as a 17-year-old Vermonter, inspired by a deep commitment to serve and protect the nation I love. Following my graduation from Norwich University, I began a long career that took me across branches and around the world. I have served in the Army Reserve, the National Guard, and on active duty in both the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army. My service includes multiple combat deployments in three wars. My final assignment before retirement in 2021 was as Chief of Staff for the National Guard Bureau Joint Staff in Arlington, Virginia.

Upon retirement, I chose to return to Vermont—my home. But I must tell you, that decision was not easy.

Vermont is widely recognized as one of the least Veteran-friendly states in the country. Chief among the concerns is the fact that we are one of the few remaining states that fully taxes military retirement pay. As a result, many military retirees—particularly those with fixed incomes—simply cannot afford to live here. The high cost of living, housing shortages, and lack of supportive state-level tax policies drive Veterans elsewhere. They choose instead to retire in states where their military pensions are exempt from income tax and where property tax relief is provided to 100% disabled Veterans.

These are not small matters. Every Veteran who retires elsewhere is a lost opportunity for Vermont. These men and women bring with them leadership, workforce skills, steady retirement income, VA benefits, and a commitment to service that can continue in our communities. Instead of spending their pensions in our local economies, they take those dollars—and their experience—to other states.

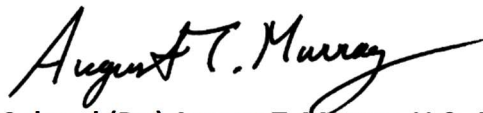
Meanwhile, our population ages and our younger workforce continues to shrink. We are losing both the future and the past at once.

I respectfully urge you to support **H.43** and **S.17**, which would provide much-needed military pension tax relief. Service men and women willingly offered their lives to defend the freedoms we enjoy, and military service is sewn into the fabric of Vermont's heritage. We have honored our Veterans in word—now let us do so in action.

Let Vermont be a state known for welcoming and appreciating those who have served. Let us send a clear message to our Veterans—past, present, and future—that they are valued, and that they belong here.

Thank you for your time and your service to the people of Vermont. I welcome the opportunity to speak further or provide in-person testimony at your invitation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "August T. Murray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Colonel (Dr.) August T. Murray, U.S. Army, Retired

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