

Dear Senators Chittenden, Lyons, Ram Hinsdale and Representative LaLonde,

I read today on the WCAX website that “State leaders want to hear from Vermonters on Wednesday about what veterans need.”

I moved to South Burlington, Vermont 16 years ago after serving over 20 years in the United States Navy. Originally from New York City, I moved here because I always enjoyed coming to Vermont during my high school and college days to ski and wanted my family to enjoy those same experiences and live in a safe community. While we have thoroughly enjoyed our time since moving here, the cost of living, to include all our taxes, have started to make our experience less enjoyable.

Since moving to Vermont, I have heard almost every year how the state plans to act on eliminating the taxation of military pensions. As you know, Vermont has taken no action on this issue. Vermont is one of the few states that still taxes military pensions. From what I have read, for me to receive an exemption of \$10,000 on my military pension, I would have to make less than \$50,000. You can't raise a family on \$50,000 in Chittenden County, or probably any county in this state.

I'm sure you also know that Vermont is one of only nine states that continue to tax social security benefits.

Vermont's population is stagnant which is not conducive to a healthy economy. A healthy economy means people want to and can afford to live in Vermont. There are other reasons people and businesses aren't coming to or staying in Vermont that I'm sure you are aware of. However, simple adjustments like eliminating the taxes on military pensions and social security benefits and offering a partial exemption on property taxes for people over 65 could help keep people from leaving Vermont.

Over the last few years, I have seen several of my neighbors leave Vermont for more tax friendly states. With no relief in sight, once my youngest child graduates from the University of Vermont, my wife and I plan to move to New Hampshire. We don't want to leave the life we have established here in Vermont, but it will make our lives more affordable to live elsewhere. Please do something to relieve the tax burden on hard working Vermonters.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Daniel Boyer