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GRAND STRAND CHAPTER

of the

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

(Representing Horry, Georgetown, Florence,

Dillon, Marion and Williamsburg Counties)

P.O. Box 15842

Surfside Beach, SC 29587

**March 13, 2020**

**The Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman Sr.**

**Chairman, Senate Finance Committee**

**111 Gressette Building**

**Columbia, SC 29201**

**Dear Senator Leatherman:**

**I respectfully request that a Senate Finance Subcommittee hearing be scheduled, as soon as possible, to consider H.3135/S.179, the Workforce Enhancement and Military Recognition Act. I further request to move on the House version of the bill, which passed unanimously on Feb 1, 2019, as this is the second year of a two-year session.**

**I recognize the considerable burdens placed on the Senate Finance Committee with many competing priorities across the budget. However, I believe H.3135/S.179 is an important priority that will provide a substantial boost to the state’s economy, support a group of citizens who spent much of their lives serving others, and more importantly, will put us in position to be more competitive with other states who have passed similar legislation to attract retirees and highly trained workers. Currently 32 states have passed similar legislation across the country, including most of the fastest growing states in the nation.**

**If the Subcommittee could take action now, the bill would be ready for consideration by the full Committee in a timely manner. This would give us a significant opportunity to not only help our veterans, but the state as well, this session.**

**I believe, for the following reasons, there is great merit in giving this important matter due consideration:**

1. **The number one issue for employers in the state is attracting a highly qualified workforce. The 2.1 million military retirees in the United States are a prized group. Most are in their prime earning years and come with exceptional skills and earning potential. They are some of the country’s best educated and best trained workers.**
2. **The military retiree workforce is declining at a rate of 1.5% per year, according to DoD statistics. Making retirement in the state more competitive will increase the number of qualified retirees who come to, or remain in, the state.**
3. **SC is currently not competitive with 32 states who do not tax military retirement income. Approving the bill will greatly improve the state’s ability to attract retiring service members to choose the state for their post service careers and retirement years.**
4. **The military presence in the state provides a $25.3 billion economic impact. The military community generates 1 out of 12 jobs in the state, 8.4% of our economy and $884.1 million in annual tax revenue.**
5. **RFA estimates that the cost in lost tax revenue in 2020-2021 will be approximately $9,181,815. For 2021-2022 that number is expected to be $9,852,765.**
6. **The Clemson University REMI study strongly reflects that attracting additional retirees will reduce and, in due course, eliminate the loss of tax revenue depending on the pace of immigration.**
7. **Highly qualified military retirees continue to be valuable assets and contributors to the community in our schools, local charities and non-profits. Military spouses also provide a two-for-one bonus.**

**Thank you for your consideration to this important issue. For additional information, or questions, please contact me at email:** [**james.r.albert@att.net**](mailto:james.r.albert@att.net)**, or phone: 203-509-8555.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**James R. Albert, LtCol, USAF (ret)**

**President**

**Grand Strand Chapter of the**

**Military Officers Association of America**