

House Veterans and Military Development Committee

Wednesday, May 21st

Carl Vineyard, United Steelworkers District 1

Proponent SB 39 - written only

Good morning Chairwoman Richardson, Vice-Chair Mathews, ranking minority member Hall and members of the House Veteran and Military Development Committee. My name is Carl Vineyard. I`m the Sub District Director for The United Steelworkers (USW) District 1, Sub District 5. USW District 1 encompasses all of Ohio and Michigan. Sub District 5 encompasses most of southern Ohio south of I-70 from Indiana to West Virginia.

I would like to start by thanking this body for allowing me a couple of minutes to speak on an important Bill, Senate Bill 39. I also want to thank the sponsors of this Bill, Senators Terry Johnson and Hearcel Craig. I live in Mount Orab Ohio in the 14th Senate District so Senator Johnson is my Senator so a special thanks again to him.

I was 17 when I enlisted in the US Navy in 1981. I did 3 years of active duty where I spent some time on the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk and got to see a lot of the world. When I got out I did 2 years in the active reserves.

I was 20 years old when I got off active duty, and in 1984 being a veteran was not a big deal. There were no major wars or conflicts going on and being a veteran did not get much attention, and I was fine with that and it was just normal. I didn`t need much in the way of veteran`s services, I got a job and went on my way.

Things are different now. The experience of so many of our men and women who have served our country in our armed services was much

different than mine. That is why I am so happy to be here today to speak in support of this important Bill for our Veterans, SB 39.

When I say the experiences of the veterans in our workforce today are different than mine, I mean in many cases worlds apart from mine. I was never under fire, or dodging bullets or seeing and experiencing terrible things.

To make my point I want to share a very poignant moment, an experience I had just a couple of years ago.

In my job I meet with many members and Local Union Officers. On one occasion I was meeting with a group of Local Union officers. One of the Officers was an Army Veteran. In our conversation Iraq came up. I made a personal comment on the war, and my union brother, a normally very calm and quiet guy, “went off” I really didn’t understand what happened, but he was different, he had a look in his eyes, and he, he lost it...

After a brief exchange he left the room. A short time later he came back in. I apologized to him because I had found out by talking to the other guys that he had been in Iraq and sometimes struggled with some of his memories.

He apologized to me for the way he acted, then he went on to explain that this was the anniversary of the date that he lost 12 men in his squad on the same day. He was the squad leader and those were his men and his friends.

I couldn’t have felt worse at that moment.

I realized on that day that even though I thought that since I was a veteran I had an idea of what being a veteran was, what their needs were and so on.

I was wrong. I had no idea until that day how really different experiences can be, and how the needs of our veterans are different, and just how important it is that they have access to information and services.

I know the Bill I'm speaking in support of does not provide any of these services, it doesn't fund any of these services, but it is one more step in making sure our veterans know about the services available to them. I'm not speaking to you today so much about what is in the Bill because I know you already know what's in it. I wanted to speak more about why it is important. Please don't take for granted that they just know. Don't take for granted that when they are being discharged from duty that they are told about all the services available to them. There is a lot going on when your getting out, it can be whirlwind of information they give you, and what you are really thinking about is getting home, seeing family and friends and yes, getting a job and going back to civilian life.

Senate Bill 39 is not a mandate that employers must post a poster, it just gives them access to it if they want it. You may think they could do that on their own and they could, but having it available from the State makes it more likely they will take advantage of it and display it in their workplace.

This information isn't just for our veterans, it is for all workers to see. You see, you don't have to be a veteran in order to help a veteran. It could be someone who reads the poster has a friend, or a loved one or just someone they meet who doesn't really know what's available and they could share that information with them.

I truly believe that by passing Senate Bill 39 and providing this information can change someone's life. It could save someone's life.

I stand before you today and humbly, and deeply ask that you pass this Bill.

I want to Thank you all for your public service and the work that you do here as members of this body. The work you do every day impacts people's lives and I know it is sometimes not easy, and not pleasant work. Some decisions you have to make can be difficult. I believe to support this Bill should be one of the easiest decisions to make. Please add your name as a co-sponsor if you haven't already and vote yes when you get the chance.

Thank you for the time to speak to you today. I'll answer any questions you may have.