

House Republican Press Release

September 25, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

**REP. HAMZY, VETERANS COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS, HAIL
PROGRAM SUPPORTING MILITARY SPOUSES**



State **Representative William A. Hamzy**, (R-Terryville), and state **Senator Andrew Maynard** (D-Stonington) and **Representative Ted Graziani** (D-Ellington), co-chairs of the General Assembly's Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs, today hailed the establishment of a program to extend unemployment benefits to military spouses who suffer job losses as a

result of military relocation.

The twelve-month program will offer unemployment compensation to the spouse of an active-duty member of the armed services who is forced to leave a job due to military relocation. While some exceptions do apply, current law generally does not grant unemployment benefits to employees who voluntarily leave their job through no fault of the employer.

"When military spouses receive orders to relocate out of state, their wives or husbands can either remain in Connecticut and keep their jobs and their paychecks or resign and move with them, losing the additional income many military families need to make ends meet," said **Representative Hamzy**, a long-time supporter of legislation to make military spouses eligible for unemployment benefits when their husbands or wives have to relocate out of state. "I'm very pleased that the legislature, the governor, the business community and the Department of Labor were able to reach agreement on this measure. It is the culmination of three years of hard work and effort. Military families should not have to suffer financially when a spouse has to redeploy out of state. The men and women of our armed forces make big sacrifices every day to preserve our freedom. Helping to keep them together is a small sacrifice the State of Connecticut should make for them."

"Our servicemen and women make great sacrifices in order to serve their country, and the support of a spouse is invaluable," said **Senator Maynard**. "Soldiers are experiencing frequent and lengthy deployments. As seen by the increases in divorce rates among military spouses, the strains on families are real and difficult to overcome. We have the opportunity to help relieve any additional financial strains caused by employment loss and to reduce burdens on families who already give so much. Our servicemen and women deserve our support in every way possible, and this benefit is another way that Connecticut will take a leading role in aiding our active duty soldiers and sailors."

Lawmakers cited the benefits to family morale as of equal or greater importance to families affected by military relocations.

“Every effort that we make to support our military and their families makes a huge difference,” **Representative Graziani** said. “I am pleased to see this program getting off the ground. Without a doubt, it will not only help our brave men and women to keep their families together during the transition periods they are constantly subject to, but will recognize the financial hardship that military families face when they must move where their country calls them. Needless to say, the morale factor is also a major benefit that goes along with this program. This is definitely a step in the right direction. This was my number one priority for the session, and I thank my co-chair **Senator Andy Maynard**, **Representative Bill Hamzy**, the Department of Defense, along with our leaders and the governor for making this happen.”

The program applies to military spouses who separate from their employer to accompany an active-duty spouse from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008. Employers *will not* be charged unemployment taxes for any former employee granted benefits under the program. The program administrator will report to the secretary of the state, to the Office of Policy and Management, and to the Appropriations, Labor, and Veterans’ Committees on enrollment and budget by January 1, 2008, who will then determine the form the program will take after its sunset date.

The program was created through a technical implementer bill approved during a special session of the Connecticut General Assembly held on Thursday, September 20th. It is awaiting final action by the governor. The program will be administered by the state Department of Labor through the Unemployment Compensation Fund.