



**AMERICAN
LEGION**

Greetings, Madame Chair and members. My name is Dr. Kristy Janigo, and I am a third generation Army veteran. I am The American Legion Department of Minnesota Legislative Chair. And I'm an assistant county veteran service officer for my day job, where I help some of the state's most vulnerable veterans find housing, navigate their involvement with the justice system, and access life changing VA benefits compensation.

First, I want to thank Representative Stephenson and his co-authors for working on this bill and for giving veterans service organizations a voice in this process. We support the amended version of the Sports Betting Bill HF 2000. Our more than 50,000 American Legion Department of Minnesota members agreed to prioritize advocating for these tax cuts above all other things we want for the service member, military family, and veteran community – because we think this will have the biggest impact. It's difficult for me to fully describe how much this means to us. There are 537 American Legion posts throughout Minnesota, and 193 of them have charitable gambling operations. We use the funds to carry out our four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Children & Youth, and Americanism.

This amendment includes a historic amount of tax cuts for charitable gambling, adding \$40 million more to the approximately \$15 million in tax cuts that passed last year with the tax omnibus bill. We say historic because we have never before seen this much in tax cuts. Our state taxes have been higher than the amount of money we've been able to deploy to help our communities, and we believe what you're doing with this bill will reverse that to the benefit of all Minnesotans.

Although most of us stopped wearing the uniform years ago, veterans have a deep-seated need to continue serving their communities and last session's changes to e-pulltabs had our people worried that mission would be compromised. That is why you likely received many emails, phone calls, voicemails, texts, and saw a flood of social media messages.

The funds we donate pay for honor guards at burial ceremonies, outdoor recreation for disabled veterans, suicide prevention programs, and stopgap funding for homeless veterans. We donate to area schools' programs to help housing and food insecure children. We support nonprofit human services organizations near our posts. We fund youth sports scholarships and equipment for local fire departments. We also fund local parades, fireworks displays, county fairs, fire equipment, school flags, marching band uniforms, football headsets, international sister-city efforts, and wheelchair-friendly playground equipment. What I am describing to you represents the best of America, and these traditions need to continue. Thank you again for hearing this bill today.

-Dr. Kristy Janigo

The American Legion Department of Minnesota Legislative Chair

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