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**COMMENTS ON 15 S-241,
RELATING TO THE FAIR HOUSING PRACTICES ACT
March 5, 2014**

This bill would prohibit discrimination in housing on the basis of military status. We have learned from the RI Commission for Human Rights that their agency has, in fact, received complaints about housing discrimination directed at veterans. In light of that recognition, the ACLU of RI supports this legislation in order to provide veterans with a legal remedy if they are victims of such discrimination. A handful of other states have passed similar laws.

We all know that returning veterans often face substantial obstacles in restarting a life that may have been interrupted by military service. There is no legitimate basis for a person to be denied such a basic necessity as housing, or otherwise be treated in a discriminatory manner in housing, because of their status as a veteran. To the contrary, it is deeply troubling to think that a person would be treated in such a manner by a landlord or other property owner solely *because* they served their country.

Veterans deserve the protections that the Fair Housing Practices Act offers other classes of residents who have similarly faced discriminatory treatment on the basis of stereotypes or prejudice. The ACLU therefore supports passage of this bill.