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In favor of HCR 5009

13 March, 2018

To the Honorable Chairman and members of the Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee:

While my husband served his country, I bribed federal employees. For example, in order to move to your next military installation somewhere else in the world, you must obtain a signature from a federal employee in the EFMP clinic. This purpose is to ensure the next installation has the infrastructure in place to meet all medical needs of every family member. Without that signature, life gets very difficult. It is not unheard of a soldier being charged with dereliction of duty and even AWOL for failing to persuade a federal employee to do their job so they may move on to their next duty station. For \$25.00 in new fishing lures or a handbag, the federal employee in the EFMP clinic is willing to do their job. \$400 cash got us into military housing. \$200 cash cleared us from military housing to move to the next duty station. \$10.00 in fresh sweets from a local bakery would get the radiology and other reports needed for pediatric specialist appointments for my daughter. \$50.00 gift certificates to local restaurants was the standard cost to get the federal employee working in DEERS to register the newborn family member. As my husband's rank climbed and the number of soldiers under him grew, the amount of gift certificates I routinely handed to the very few employees working in DEERS became expensive. At the start of his military career, I would spend about \$1,000 in bribing federal employees over the 3 years stationed at any military base. By his 3rd deployment, I was spending around \$1,800 to \$2,000 a year bribing federal officials to do their job. That was in addition to the aid routinely offered by my state senator.

It was my husband's third deployment when my anger set in. The ridiculousness, that these people, safe in their comfortable job, making twice as much as my husband, with a lot better medical, retirement and other benefits, would find routine excuse to avoid doing their job unless receiving a gift. This is one of the reasons why I volunteer for Convention of States.

I do not expect that any proposal would result in an Amendment that would suddenly compel me to want to attend one of my husband's appointments at the VA. Or that I would not suffer symptoms of PTSD after renewing my military dependant ID card. There are multiple and complicated reasons as to why our federal bureaucracy has become such a quagmire. I have no doubt the ideas to remedy such will be just as complicated. Three fourths majority of the states needed to ratify any proposal is a very big hurdle. 100s of Amendments have been offered since the founding of our nation yet, only 27 have succeeded in overcoming that huge obstacle.

I do expect however, that New York, whose VA facilities are viewed favorably, will sit with Texas whose VA facilities are viewed poorly, and talk to each other and learn from each other about what works and what does not work in their states.

It is in the best interest of the federal employee to prevent the states from getting together for that conversation. It is in the best interest of members of Congress to prevent the states from getting together for a long-overdue, conversation. Please consider, my husband joined the military in 1990. The problems we had with bureaucracy at the point of his entry, have not resolved. No election, in all of those years has ever offered a reprieve. The mere existence of the lobbying organizations of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Vets and others, is evidence, from their creation, that no election will resolve these issues. These are not Republican vs Democrat issues, they are Federal vs State issues. It is time for the states to get together and have this conversation. It is time for a Convention of States.

Please, vote yes on HCR 5009.