

REMARKS BY REP. KEN GORDON

DELIVERED AT BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEMORIAL DAY ~ MAY 30, 2016

Thank you Patriotic Holidays Chairman Paul Purchia, Joe Piantedosi and the rest of the committee; Selectmen Fedele, Rosenberg and Siegenthaler; OC O'Connor and the wonderful residents of Bedford for giving me the chance to address you on this Memorial Day morning.

Thank you to the Veterans gathered here and their families, for reminding us of our responsibility to honor your sacrifice and the sacrifice of current service members.

Thank you to the Scouts for reminding us of our bright future ahead.

Thank you to the Bedford Minutemen for reminding us of our rich military history, and to the police and firefighters willing to answer a call to danger that may come any time.

Thank you to Col. David Dunklee and the servicemen and women from Hanscom Air Force Base.

It is an honor and a privilege to gather with you on this Memorial Day, to honor the fallen soldiers and sailors from Bedford, and indeed through all of Massachusetts and the country, and to remember the bravery and sacrifices of our military heroes and the families they were forced to leave behind.

President Kennedy once said that "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, and the men it remembers." If he was able to repeat these words today, I am sure he would change them to refer to the men and women who sacrifice so much.

Earlier this month we learned of the horrific murder of police officer Ron Tarantino in Auburn. He grew up in nearby Tewksbury. He attended Middlesex Community College, which has a campus right here in Bedford. But we don't need to consider those degrees of separation. There is no separation between the brave officers who keep our communities safe. They take pride in their work, and we take pride that we have them there to do the jobs they do.

Tragedy also visited military heroes with local ties. Last year we lost two airmen in Afghanistan assigned to Hanscom AFB, Senior Airman Nathan Sartain, 29, and Airman First Class Kacey Ruiz, 21. They put themselves at risk and paid the ultimate price. Our gratitude should never cease.

President Regan once said, "And we owe them something, these boys," And if I may, these women as well. "We owe them first a promise: That just as they did not forget their missing comrades, neither, ever, will we."

We in state government continue to respect the service of our Veterans by focusing on policies that reflect our values of respect to their service. Last month we voted to expand protections in employment discrimination so that never again will an employer be able to get away with refusing to hire a reservist or Veteran simply because they think they may be called into service. Believe it or not, some disabled Veterans find that their military disability pensions disqualify them from certain housing benefits. This bill will excuse those in the active military from accruing excise taxes on their automobiles, because the last thing that should greet a service member returning from conflict is a bill.

In addition, this bill will require cities and towns to give a preference to Veterans in public housing, because the least we can do for our Veterans returning from service is make sure they have a decent place to live. Many municipalities such as ours already do that, but now all Veterans will be treated equally.

And I am personally humbled to have been appointed just last month by Governor Baker to the Massachusetts State Council of the Military Interstate

Children's Compact Commission, where are charged with the advancement of issues facing education of the children of military families. Here in Bedford we know those issues well. I will be joining as fellow members Education Secretary Jim Peyser, Veterans Secretary Francisco Urena, Hanscom school liaison specialist Laurel Wironen and others.

So on this Memorial Day, I am humbled to join you as we take some time to remember, those whose lives were cut short so that we can live our lives with liberty and justice for all. Thank you for allowing me to share this important ceremony with you.