

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION: 08-19-C
SUBMITTED BY: The American Legion, Department of Michigan
SUBJECT: Restore and Increase Burial and Plot Allowance

RESOLUTION

- WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and
- WHEREAS, Benefits for deceased veterans include a burial and a plot allowance to assist families in providing a proper burial of their loved one; and
- WHEREAS, The National Cemeteries Act (Public Law 95-73) enacted in 1973 established a burial allowance of \$250 for eligible wartime veterans and a \$1,500 burial allowance for veterans who died of a service-connected condition; and
- WHEREAS, The Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1990 limited the payment of the burial plot allowance of \$150, which was previously paid to all honorably discharged wartime veterans, to only those veterans who are indigent or who are in receipt of VA disability compensation or pension; and
- WHEREAS, Although there have been subsequent increases in the allowances, the infrequent incremental increases have meant that the current \$300 burial plot allowance and respective \$300 and \$2,000 burial allowances have not kept pace with inflation and increases in the cost of living throughout the years; and
- WHEREAS, Public Law 95-73 originally covered 13% of a private burial plot and, now, only covers 2%; and
- WHEREAS, The \$250 burial allowance under Public Law 95-73 represented 22% of the cost of an average funeral of a wartime veteran, at the time, and the current burial allowance reflects only 4% of the cost; and

WHEREAS, The corresponding allowance for veterans who died of a service-connected condition covered 73% of the same average burial; now it only covers 39% of the current average funeral cost;; and

WHEREAS, Increases, based on VA's Price-Waterhouse-Cooper Study, "Assessment of Burial Benefits Administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs" (December 2000), would help to restore the amount and percentages of the allowance payments relative to current burial and plot costs; and

WHEREAS, Tying these allowances to the Consumer Price Index, thus requiring VA to adjust the allowance for inflation annually, would eliminate the need for periodic legislative action to bring the allowance in line current with burial and plot costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, Department of Michigan, in annual Department Convention assembled in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 19-22, 2008, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to return the burial allowances and burial plot allowance to all veterans who served during a time of war or conflict; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the burial allowance for veterans now eligible under 38 United States Code (USC) 2302 and 2303 be increased from \$300 to \$1,350; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the burial allowance for veterans who died as a result of a service connected condition as set forth in 38 USC 2307 be increased from \$2,000 to \$4,000; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the burial plot allowance be increased from \$300 to \$800; and, be it

FINALLY RESOLVED, That VA be required to annually adjust burial allowances and burial plot allowance for inflation by tying the increased allowances to the Consumer Price Index.