

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION: 08-21-C
SUBMITTED BY: The American Legion, Department of Michigan
SUBJECT: Extend Presumptive Period for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) to Seven Years

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) begins insidiously, involving degeneration of the nerve cells either in the brain stem or spinal cord and it's characterized by atrophy and almost always fibrillation of the muscular system of the body; and

WHEREAS, ALS in its primary stage is difficult, if not impossible, to diagnose since in this stage the condition may appear to be dormant with little or no progression of symptoms for many years, thus leading the individual and his doctor to believe that the condition has become arrested and nothing more is done to establish its diagnostic entity; and

WHEREAS, Some Gulf War veterans have been diagnosed with ALS several years following discharge from service and some veterans have been denied service connection because the condition was not diagnosed while on active duty or within the presumptive time frame; and

WHEREAS, Gulf War veterans diagnosed with ALS so far appear to be generally younger than the average ALS sufferers; and

WHEREAS, In addition to two studies, published in the Scientific journal "Neurology" in September 2003, that concluded that deployed Gulf War veterans are twice as likely as their non-deployed counterparts to develop ALS, new research conducted by Harvard University suggests an elevated risk of ALS for anyone who served in the military; and

WHEREAS,

A presumptive period of one year from the date of termination of active duty as currently provided for ALS until Title 38, United States Code, Section 1112 (a) is inadequate; 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 urge that legislation be enacted to extend the current presumptive period for service connection of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis from one year to seven years from the date of separation from active duty.