

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION: #21-15

SUBMITTED BY: Department Finance Committee

SUBJECT: Combining the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program and Patriot Fund

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The American Legion, Department of Michigan Reconnect Committee, as a way to support our committee mission statement, created the Patriot Fund in 2009 as a broad based, non-typical temporary financial assistance program inspired by the needs of our Michigan National Guard families providing assistance to those service members and veterans who were not able to find assistance elsewhere, regardless of wartime service era, making it the first recognized TFA program in our state serving peacetime veterans; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion, Department of Michigan Reconnect Committee created the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior program (also referred as MWRWF) in 2010 expanding the Committee's outreach services for our war time veterans and military families including, but not limited to, such services as: all expenses paid family retreats, Post Traumatic Stress retreats, workshops and presentations provide temporary financial assistance to recently separated military service members with emergent need with reintegration after completion of their military service, adaptive and alternate therapy modalities; and

WHEREAS, The Reconnect Committee stopped actively fundraising for the Patriot Fund in fiscal year 2020; and

WHEREAS, The Reconnect Committee has been submitting applications to the MWRWF for Veterans that are not covered under the intended purpose of the MWRWF account, and

WHEREAS, Granting temporary financial assistance from funds not intended for the stated purpose is in violation of general accounting practices and rules under U.S. IRS non-profit corporation; and

WHEREAS, This practice has been brought up by the Department past audits, and

WHEREAS, Efforts to work with the Department Reconnect Committee to bring the programs into compliance with GAP and IRS non-profit compliance rules have not been successful; and

WHEREAS, It is the responsibility of the Department Finance Committee, per Article VI Section 8 of the Department Bylaws, "All funds received from any source for the Department of Michigan, including any Board or Committee created and or appointed by The American Legion, Department of Michigan, shall be under the possession, control and supervision of the Finance/Personnel Committee. Said Committee shall be charged with the duty of setting up a proper and adequate system of centralized control and procuring audits of such funds.", and

WHEREAS, The Department Finance Committee is fulfilling their fiduciary duties to protect the American Legion Department of Michigan, and

WHEREAS, That since the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program is the only program of the two with an established social media presence and the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program generates the majority of the community organizational support and donations; and,

WHEREAS, Both funds include a temporary financial assistance component, but are different, one targeting all veterans, no wartime service required, and one supporting recently separated military service members; and

WHEREAS, All veterans regardless of wartime service still need assistance; and

WHEREAS, The Department is committed to assisting veterans in a legal and ethical manner, the time has come to consolidate efforts, concentration of fundraising, and mission to one fund that supports the previous mission of the Patriot Fund and the MWRWF combined; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, Department of Michigan, Department Executive Committee via Zoom video vote, March 29, 2021, that the Department of Michigan approve the recommendation from The American Legion, Department of Michigan Finance Committee, that the Patriot Fund be dissolved; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department Adjutant is directed to maintain the 'Doing Business As' Michigan Patriot Fund for future needs; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Michigan American Legion Foundation be notified that funds currently available in the Patriot Fund Liability Account be transferred to the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Fund Liability Account for immediate use; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the mission of the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Fund be amended to include temporary financial assistance for emergent needs to Veterans as defined by the Michigan American Legion Foundation procedures; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Michigan American Legion Foundation make adjustments to their procedures and processes to reflect these changes; and be it

FINALLY RESOLVED, That fundraising and promotion by the Department Reconnect Committee be for the MWRWF with its additional mission.