Honoring All Who Served

THIS MONTH WE REMEMBER WITH GRATITUDE THE VETERANS WHO ANSWERED OUR NATION'S CALL TO DUTY IN THE QUEST FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM AT HOME AND AROUND THE WORLD. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!**

PROTECTING THOSE WHO PROTECT US

Michigan's military veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan are the focus of a comprehensive, bipartisan initiative working its way through the Legislature. This far-reaching legislation protects property, provides business opportunities, and offers college opportunities for our servicemen and women. I am proud to be a sponsor of this package.

Key parts of the plan would:

- Establish a "Michigan Patriot Business" designation for companies with at least a 50 percent ownership by an active service member or veteran of the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan.
- Increase disabled veterans preference in state purchasing from 3 percent to 5 percent.
- Prohibit lapse of life insurance policies for active duty military.
- Safeguard property of military personnel from sale or foreclosure while serving and for 6 months after return from active duty.
- Require schools to give excused absence to students attending events for their returning or departing parents.
- Grant family of service members stationed in Michigan residency status for college tuition.
- Allow children of active military who are transferred out of state to retain residency for college tuition.
- Establish a Disabled Veteran Tuition Assistance program.

Our veterans performed their mission while serving on the battlefield overseas. This legislation aims to support them in their return home. Follow the status of Senate Bills 731-756 at **www.michiganlegislature.org**.

November 2007

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SENATOR HARDIMAN SUPPORTS SPECIAL DEER HUNTING SEASON FOR DISABLED VETS

A pilot hunting season for disabled veterans attracted participants from the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. It was held in conjunction with the youth firearm deer season in September and conducted in Mason, Oceana and Marquette counties.

Under Senate Bill 633, now Public Act 60 of 2007, the special event was designed to help the disabled veterans participate in outdoor activities, like hunting, that they may have enjoyed previously but need special assistance to continue. Those who have become permanently disabled while protecting our country have made an incredible sacrifice. This event helped thank them for their service.

The Natural Resources Commission will evaluate the pilot hunting season to determine if the season can be continued or expanded in other counties across the state next year.

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

HARDIMAN SUPPORTS HELPING HAND FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Under legislation passed by the Michigan Senate, taxpayers would have an added opportunity to help Michigan's citizen-soldiers by donating to the Military Family Relief Fund. The current income tax check-off for this program is set to expire at the end of this year. Senate Bill 515 extends the program another four years.

The fund was established in 2004 to provide help in times of need for families of eligible members of the Michigan National Guard or the U.S. Armed Forces Reserves who are serving in the war on terrorism. To date, nearly 200 grants have been awarded. This assistance helps families with food, housing, utilities, medical services, insurance payments or other needs while their soldier is on active duty or has incurred a line-of-duty injury or illness.

Giving a helping hand is one small way to show our appreciation to the citizen-soldiers who put their lives on the line to protect our freedom and security. The bill awaits action in the House.

Military Family Relief Fund

To apply for assistance, or to donate to the Fund, please visit the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs website at **www.michigan.gov/dmva**.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE! AMERICA'S LIVING VETERANS

World War I	4
World War II	2,914,000
Korean War	2,970,000
Vietnam War	7,230,600
Gulf War	2,271,000

Department of Veterans Affairs 2007

RESOURCES

- Access the latest information on veterans benefits and assistance at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website at **www.va.gov**. Or call toll-free 1-800-827-1000.
- Stay on top of veterans issues. For an online directory of dozens of veterans service organizations, visit **www.va.gov/vso/**.
- Have a question about veterans employment and training? Call 1-800-455-5228.
- Keep up to date on homeland security issues at **www.michigan.gov/homeland**.
- Follow news about the troops on the frontlines in the global war on terrorism at **www.DefendAmerica.mil**.
- Check the online business directory for a list of Michigan companies involved in homeland security at **www.michigan.org/medc/ttc/HomelandSecurity/**.

HONORING MICHIGAN'S EARLIEST VETERANS

The Capitol building and grounds reflect Michigan's long tradition of honoring our military veterans. Along with the placement of monuments and plaques, replicas of battle flags from Michigan's Civil War regiments are showcased on the first floor of the rotunda.

The flags were a key means of communication in battle. Soldiers looked to their flag to learn if they should advance, hold their ground, or retreat. Those who carried the flags had a dangerous job—they suffered the highest mortality rates of the war.

The battle flags were returned to the state in 1866. The original flags are now in the Michigan Historical Museum where they are being preserved. The replicas featured in the Capitol are a visible reminder of the bravery of some of Michigan's earliest veterans.

(Battle Flags: Michigan and the Civil War, Michigan Government Television)