

VETERANS UPDATE 2016

Dear Neighbor,

First and foremost, I would like to thank all of our brave veterans and those currently serving in the United States Armed Forces for their continued loyalty and commitment to defending our country. Your dedication and patriotism should never go unnoticed, and we are forever indebted to your service.

My colleagues and I are proud to fight for veterans and their rights while serving and upon returning to civilian life. During my time in the Legislature, we have pursued a variety of reforms to ensure quality care and proper benefits.

It is my privilege to share the efforts we have made in Lansing in your honor. From jobs and education to benefits and services, veterans are a top priority in Michigan. I hope you find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.



Sincerely,

LARRY INMAN

State Representative, 104th District
Military and Veterans Affairs
Appropriations Subcommittee Chair

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Recreation

With four seasons of fun and recreation throughout the Great Lakes State, here are some special opportunities available to Michigan veterans.

★ **Fireworks-Free Fourth of July**

While veterans enjoy relaxing during the Fourth of July, some have experienced enough loud noise and explosions for a lifetime. The Department of Natural Resources offers a quieter, fireworks-free Independence Day in select Michigan state parks during the Fourth of July weekend.

★ **Hunting and Fishing Licenses**

Veterans who enjoy the outdoors and who are classified 100-percent disabled by the Veterans Administration are eligible for free fishing and hunting licenses from the state. Please have proof of military status when purchasing your license. The free licenses are also available to active duty servicemen and women.

★ **Free State Park Access**

If camping is your thing, Medal of Honor recipients, 100-percent disabled veterans and former prisoners of war whose vehicles bear specialty license plates are entitled to free entry into campgrounds and parks requiring a Recreation Passport. Visit your local branch of the Secretary of State for information.

★ **Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors (MiOFO)**

This support network provides outdoor recreation opportunities, along with support in recovery through connecting with nature. Wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges can enjoy these opportunities through tracked wheelchair reservations, accessible hunting blind reservations and one-on-one hunting assistants.

For more information about these recreation opportunities, please visit www.michigan.gov/dnr.



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STATE REP. **LARRY INMAN**

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Supporting Veterans and Families Through Strong Legislation

There are more than 650,000 veterans residing in Michigan and many more residents currently serving in the United States Armed Forces. I know the very real challenges you face every day are serious, and we are here to help. My colleagues and I in the House of Representatives have focused on several pieces of legislation to make veterans' quality of life a key priority in Michigan.

★ Academic Success

In order to make it easier for veterans to return to school upon re-entry to civilian life, Public Act 44 of 2015 (House Bill 4060) allows military training and experience to be recognized as qualifications acceptable towards academic credit at four-year public universities. This expands upon legislation passed last term, to aid veterans and those currently serving in completing their education in a relatively timely manner in the community college arena.

★ Employment and Skilled Trades

Veterans obtain a rare set of invaluable skills and talents through educational and occupational experience, which makes them uniquely fit for civilian careers. The House passed House Bill 4134, now PA 191 of 2015, which allows military training to count toward civilian licensure to help veterans looking for work as boiler installers, repairers or inspectors.

★ Bringing Michigan In-Line With Federal Protections

I supported legislation to bring Michigan in-line with the federal standard of employment protections for military service members as demonstrated by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. This will protect the men and women of the National Guard from losing their employment in the state of Michigan if they are called to military service in another state. This is common-sense legislation that will grant out-of-state National Guard members the same job security as Michigan's in-state National Guard members.



Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency

In 2013, Governor Rick Snyder created the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency to connect those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and their families, with the services and benefits they have earned.

The MVAA recently announced the Michigan Veteran-Friendly School program, which recognizes colleges, universities, community colleges and training facilities that go above and beyond to help Michigan veterans earn their college degree. For a list of schools and how they rank, visit MichiganVeterans.com/VetFriendlySchools. MVAA also recognizes employers that commit to military veteran recruitment, training and retention practices by awarding them as a Certified Veteran-Friendly Employer.

In addition to recognizing Veteran-Friendly Schools and Employers, the MVAA also assists veterans in alleviating their short-term financial emergencies through the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund and helps counties better serve their local veterans through MVAA County Incentive Grants. So far in 2016, more than \$198,000 in one-time grant funding has been distributed to 19 county veterans service offices.

Awareness and Support for Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries (PTSI)

My colleagues and I are helping erase the stigma associated with seeking help for post-traumatic stress disorder and other post-traumatic stress injuries. I supported Public Act 146 of 2015, which will provide tags and vest patches for service animals that accompany veterans in public. This bill was part of a bipartisan package to increase public access for veterans with service dogs.

The new law defines a person of disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that limits life activity, has a history or record of impairment, or is perceived by others as having an impairment.

Men and women struggle every day with the invisible wounds of war as well as physical disabilities. The state of Michigan provides support for armed services personnel and veterans struggling with emotional, mental and physical stress disorders.



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