Rep. Johnson: We must expand veterans services throughout Michigan

I fully support legislation providing counties a grant to establish and maintain a veteran service office with accredited service officers present. Pre-existing veteran service departments will be provided with needed resources to further increase the level of their services.

These offices and case agents are vitally important. They connect military veterans with services through referrals to local and state agencies while also assisting with federal benefit claims. Veterans in counties where access to accredited county service officers is minimal often have a hard time accessing the help they need.

Michigan is home to more than 600,000 veterans. It is imperative we have an accredited service officer present in every county to make sure support is available to every single veteran in our state.

Area Veterans Service Offices

— Allegan County —
Veterans Services Office
3265 122nd Ave., Suite 200
Allegan, MI 49010
269-673-0501

— Kent County —
Veterans Services Office
836 Fuller Ave. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-632-5722

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency
800-MICH-VET ★ www.MichiganVeterans.com
Rep. Johnson commends improvements at Grand Rapids Home for Veterans

I am happy to report that significant improvements have been made at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. A federal survey shows the home now has met an impressive 230 of 231 standards.

As many veterans and their families remember, the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans received a disturbing audit in 2016 revealing numerous abuses and violations. The results of this audit were truly shocking and unacceptable. Veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country and state deserve the utmost care.

I will continue to monitor Michigan’s veterans homes to ensure additional improvements are made. No family or veteran should ever be concerned with the standard of care they or their loved ones are receiving at our state-run veterans facilities.

Giving high school dropouts a second chance through the MYCA

The Michigan Youth Challenge Academy (MYCA) is a great opportunity for teenagers on the verge of dropping out of high school. Operated by the Michigan National Guard, the MYCA is a free and voluntary residential education program for both males and females ages 16 to 18, who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of high school and have no felony convictions.

Over a 22-week period, academy participants attend classes as they would in traditional high school. However, they also engage in a variety of activities aimed at development of leadership skills, teamwork, physical fitness, employment skills and civic responsibility.

This program offers hope to teenagers, teaches them life skills increasing the likelihood of them being law abiding citizens. Cadets who graduate through the program will not only earn a full semester of high school credits, but also can qualify to receive credits from Kellogg Community College. Dropping out of high school doesn’t have to be the end of the road. Michigan Youth Challenge Academy is a second chance.

Military experience adds value to the workplace

Military experience is a great way for young people to learn professional skills that are transferable to the workplace, such as leadership and management, professional communication, problem-solving, team-building, and many others.

But too many veterans are facing workplace inequity by receiving less pay for the same skills they gained in the armed forces. I helped approve House Bill 4858 to make sure the skills of these brave men and women are never overlooked in the public sector.

The legislation allows state employers to consider a veteran’s military experience as relevant work experience for the purpose of determining pay.

Thank you for serving our country & protecting our freedoms.

Dear Neighbor,

As a former Staff Sergeant in the United States Air Force and proud member of the Military and Veterans Committee, it is my honor to be a voice for you in Lansing. While we may never be able to fully repay our brave men and women in uniform for their selfless service, we must honor veterans by ensuring they receive the best possible care and services.

This past year, I helped approve bills to benefit the lives of the heroes who currently serve our nation and those who have honorably served in the past. Additionally, I am supporting a new plan to give all veterans greater access to a county veteran service office.

Inside, you will find other important information on recent legislation to help our military heroes.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

STEVE JOHNSON
State Representative

(517) 373-0840 • StevenJohnson@house.mi.gov
www.RepJohnson.com

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