

REDEFINING VETERANS DAY AND MEMORIAL DAY

WHEREAS, most polls show that a majority of Americans support our troops; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America has a volunteer military that is composed of less than one percent of the population; and

WHEREAS, more than 1.6 million Americans have served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom; and

WHEREAS, nearly 5,000 soldiers have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan, 58,000 were killed in Vietnam, 54,000 in Korea, and 400,000 in WWII, as well as numerous others killed and wounded in conflicts and accidents while in service to their country; and

WHEREAS, nearly 300,000 veterans currently suffer from PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, and other mental health disorders; and

WHEREAS, the current population of homeless veterans fluctuates between 500,000–800,000 during the course of a year; and

WHEREAS, the survival rate for the severely wounded has increased, as has the long-term recovery period for our wounded veterans and their caregivers; and

WHEREAS, home caregivers and volunteers (mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, brothers, sisters, concerned citizens, etc.) providing support to military service members who have been either wounded in combat operations or as a result of line-of-duty activities are given no government assistance and are dependent on not-for-profit organizations for support; and

WHEREAS, those service members returning from numerous extended deployments in combat zones face difficult personal and family issues which have led to abnormally high rates of divorce and suicide; and

WHEREAS, while physical wounds of war are more detectable, PTSD and other psychological wounds are as debilitating and dangerous to the life of a returning veteran and their families; and

WHEREAS, Americans' attention to past generations of veterans has faded, and this will also likely happen with this generation of veterans after current conflicts are resolved; and

WHEREAS, Memorial Day and Veterans Day are mainly observed by the general public through participation in retail sales events or by enjoying a day off work; and

WHEREAS, military men and women and their families serve honorably on our behalf; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the United States support and honor our military service members and their families; and

WHEREAS, the honor and soul of our country depends on how we treat those that defend our freedom; and

WHEREAS, on Memorial Day, we should remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation; and

WHEREAS, on Veterans Day, we should honor the service of those who have returned home; and

WHEREAS, the Beyond Tribute initiative aims to enhance the meaning of and change how we celebrate Memorial Day and Veterans Day; and

WHEREAS, Beyond Tribute is a not-for-profit organization that will gather donated funds and disburse grants to A-rated veteran service organizations that provide vitally needed services for our veterans and military families; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors supports the Beyond Tribute initiative in its effort to engage the American public in recasting Memorial Day and Veterans Day as days of service; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors supports the Beyond Tribute initiative in its effort to engage the American public on Memorial Day and Veterans Day by encouraging businesses and consumers to contribute to charitable organizations whose purpose is to assist wounded veterans, including those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and other "invisible wounds of war"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that members of the U.S. Conference of Mayors will encourage their local businesses, chambers of commerce and constituents to participate in the Beyond Tribute initiative and begin to redefine how we celebrate our national holidays in a manner that truly honors and supports our service members.