

HOUSE No. 3500

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Denise C. Garlick

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act promoting fairness and transparency of organizations supporting military personnel and families.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Denise C. Garlick</i>	<i>13th Norfolk</i>	<i>1/19/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 3500

By Representative Garlick of Needham, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3500) of Denise C. Garlick for legislation to promote fairness and transparency of organizations supporting military personnel and families. Veterans and Federal Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act promoting fairness and transparency of organizations supporting military personnel and families.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 35CC of Chapter 10 of the General Laws is amended by striking
2 said section and inserting in place thereof the following: -

3 SECTION 35CC. There shall be an expendable trust, to be known as the Massachusetts
4 Military Family Relief Fund, the purpose of which is to help members of the Massachusetts
5 National Guard and Massachusetts residents who are members of the reserves of the armed
6 forces of the United States and who were called to active duty after September 11, 2001, and
7 their families, to defray the costs of food, housing, utilities, medical services, and other expenses.
8 The fund shall consist of revenues received by the commonwealth under the provisions of
9 section 6K of chapter 62, from public and private sources as gifts, grants, and donations to
10 further the purposes of the fund. Revenues credited to the fund under this section shall remain in
11 the fund, not subject to appropriation, for application to those purposes. The state treasurer shall
12 not deposit the revenues in, or transfer the revenues to, the General Fund or any other fund other

13 than the Massachusetts Military Family Relief Fund. The state treasurer shall deposit monies in
14 the fund in accordance with sections 34 and 34A of chapter 29 in such manner as will secure the
15 highest interest rate available consistent with safety of the fund and with the requirement that all
16 amounts on deposit be available for immediate withdrawal at any time. Revenues received for
17 the Military Family Relief Fund shall be directly paid to qualified organizations as established by
18 Section 13 of this Act by the military division through the established expendable trust.

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 130 of the Acts of 2005 is hereby amended by striking out section
20 13 through section 15, inclusive, and inserting in place thereof the following: -

21 SECTION 13. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the secretary
22 of the department of veterans' services shall, on January 1, 2024 and every even numbered year
23 thereafter, procure and award the administration of the grant program to qualified non-profit
24 organizations, hereafter referred to as the awarded organizations, in equal apportionments. Said
25 awarded organizations shall be principally focused on providing aid to Massachusetts military
26 service members and their families, and shall be headquartered in the Commonwealth. The
27 military division shall make available the revenues received from the Military Family Relief
28 Fund after designation by the secretary of the department of veterans' services, and grants from
29 the Massachusetts Military Family Relief Fund shall be made to a member or to families of
30 persons who are members of the Massachusetts National Guard or Massachusetts residents who
31 are members of the reserves of the armed forces of the United States and who were called to
32 active duty after September 11, 2001.

33 The department of veterans' services shall promulgate rules and regulations to establish
34 eligibility requirements for assistance under this section which shall be reviewed by the military
35 division.

36 SECTION 14. (a) The awarded organizations shall submit an annual report to the
37 secretary of the department of veterans' services and the house and senate committees on ways
38 and means detailing:

39 (1) the expenditure of the funds including the amount of assistance provided from the
40 fund by branch of service, regular or reserve duty classification, amount of individual assistance
41 provided, the reason that qualified a member of the military or the member's family for
42 assistance and the balance remaining within the interest income account for future
43 disbursements;

44 (2) the name, address, rank and rating, branch of service, deployment location and
45 amounts of financial assistance provided to each eligible military member and to the member's
46 family.

47 (b) The information provided pursuant to clause (1) of subsection (a) shall be public
48 record. The information provided pursuant to paragraph 2 of subsection (a) shall be confidential
49 and shall be available for inspection only by the secretary of administration and finance and the
50 general court. Names, addresses and deployment locations shall not be in any report available for
51 public access. The secretary of administration and finance and the legislators with legal access to
52 the report shall be required to hold names, addresses and deployment locations confidential.

53 Failure to file said annual reports may result in an immediate termination of the
54 designation for administration of this fund, in accordance with Section 15 of this Act.

55 SECTION 15. In the event that the awarded organizations lose their status as a charitable
56 corporation or ceases to exist, the secretary of the department of veterans' services shall identify
57 a suitable charitable organization to administer the grants.