

SENATE No. 2337

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Susan L. Moran

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:

Susan L. Moran

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Plymouth and Barnstable

SENATE No. 2337

By Ms. Moran, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2337) of Susan L. Moran 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. Chapter 10 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition,
2 is amended by striking out section 35CC and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

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 chapter 130 of the acts of 2005 by the military division through the established
19 expendable trust.

20 SECTION 2. Chapter 130 of the acts of 2005 is hereby amended by striking out sections
21 13 through 15 and inserting in place thereof the following sections:-

22 Section 13. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the Secretary of
23 Veterans' Services shall, on January 1, 2024 and every 2nd calendar year thereafter, procure and
24 award the administration of the grant program to qualified non-profit organizations, hereafter
25 referred to as the awarded organizations, in equal apportionments. The awarded organizations
26 shall be principally focused on providing aid to Massachusetts military service members and
27 their families, and shall be headquartered in the Commonwealth. The military division shall
28 make available the revenues received from the Military Family Relief Fund after designation by
29 the Secretary of Veterans' Services, and grants from the Massachusetts Military Family Relief
30 Fund shall be made to a member or to families of persons who are members of the Massachusetts
31 National Guard or Massachusetts residents who are members of the reserves of the armed forces
32 of the United States and who were called to active duty after September 11, 2001.

33 The awarded organizations shall promulgate rules and regulations to establish eligibility
34 requirements for assistance under this section which shall be reviewed by the military division.

35 In developing rules and regulations, said awarded organizations shall consult with the military
36 division, military support groups, including, but not limited to, the Family Assistance Fund and
37 family assistance centers.”

38 Section 14. (a) The awarded organizations shall submit an annual report to the secretary
39 of Veterans’ Services and the house and senate committees on ways and means detailing:-

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

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

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

54 Failure to file said annual reports on a timely basis may result in an immediate
55 termination of the designation for administration of this fund, in accordance with Section 15 of
56 this Act.

57 Section 15. In the event that the awarded organizations lose their status as a charitable
58 corporation or ceases to exist, the Secretary of Veterans' Services shall identify a suitable
59 charitable organization to administer the grants.