

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 107**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MARCH 4, 2024

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Resolution No. 107.

This resolution urges the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to utilize and fund existing paratransit transportation networks to transport disabled veterans to and from its New Jersey medical centers.

Approximately five million veterans in the United States have a service-connected disability, and about 53,000 of those veterans live in New Jersey. The VA operates two medical centers in New Jersey, with one in East Orange and one in Lyons. Service-connected disabilities can adversely impact veterans' abilities to access necessary medical care at these facilities.

Currently, the VA provides transportation service via the Veterans Transportation Service, but this service has limitations that can result in the reduced efficiency of transporting disabled veterans to and from medical appointments. Disabled American Veterans and other veterans' service organizations also provide free van transportation to and from VA medical centers in New Jersey, but these non-profit organizations should not shoulder the responsibility to provide properly coordinated VA-funded patient transport for deserving veterans and qualified family members. It has also been reported by numerous New Jersey veterans that the transportation service provided to these VA facilities is deficient, with veterans being left at facilities for hours, overnight, and in adverse weather conditions.

Both New Jersey counties and non-profit social service organizations have existing paratransit transportation for use by senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. These high quality county and non-profit paratransit providers may be able to expand their coverage to meet the transportation needs of veterans traveling to and from VA facilities if provided funding to cover the cost of such an expansion.