

*A Resolution by Luzerne County Council Adopting the Hidden Hero's Community Plan*

WHEREAS, the series of wars and conflicts in which our nation has been engaged over time, since World War II, has resulted in 5.5 million military and veteran caregivers who are parents, spouses, siblings and friends, caring for those wounded, ill or injured who have served our nation, as documented by the 2014 RAND study commissioned by Elizabeth Dole Foundation; and

WHEREAS, the daily tasks of these military and veteran caregivers can include bathing, feeding, dressing, and caring for the grievous injuries of wounded warriors, administering medications, providing emotional support, caring the family and the home, and working outside the home to earn essential income; and

WHEREAS, the nation provides multi-faceted support to our wounded, ill and injured veterans and service members through public, private, and philanthropic resources, but their caregivers receive little support or acknowledgement; and

WHEREAS, most military and veteran caregivers consider the challenging work they do as simply carrying out their civic and patriotic duty, without realizing they are, in fact, caregivers, and do not identify themselves as such; and

WHEREAS, an alarming number of military and veteran caregivers, according to research, are suffering numerous debilitating mental, physical and emotional effects as a result of their caregiving duties; and

WHEREAS, Luzerne County desires to recognize and support those who are serving in these vital roles in our own community;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the governing body of Luzerne County that:

- Luzerne County becomes a Hidden Hero County in support of military and veteran caregivers
- Luzerne County seek to identify military and veteran caregivers residing in our community and determine the unique challenge they face
- Luzerne County work to ensure that our government, organizations, employers, and non-profits are aware of the unique challenges of military and veteran caregivers and are encouraged to create supportive environments and opportunities for assistance
- Luzerne County plan an annual observance or resource fair to recognize the community's military and veteran caregivers in partnership with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation's national Hidden Heroes campaign and connect them with the local resources
- Luzerne County encourage all who care for and support veterans and service members to extend that support their caregivers
- Luzerne County designates a point of contact for our community, from the public or private sector, for citizens and organizations wanting to offer support, and caregivers who need that support
- Luzerne County uses the Elizabeth Dole Foundation's Military Caregiver Experience Map to understand the stages of the military caregiver journey and use it as a tool to encourage community understanding and support