

Resolution Town of Monson

Whereas the Soldiers Home in Holyoke has provided "Care With Honor and Dignity" to thousands Veterans since its opening in 1952;

Whereas in 2010, Veteran rooms at Holyoke were determined by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs to be non-compliant with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard;

Whereas in 2012, The Massachusetts Needs Assessment Study determined that "of the 278 current beds, less than 5% meet VA Standards";

Whereas in 2013, a design to add 120 private rooms, as well as convert existing rooms thus creating 278 fully compliant beds, was approved for 65% federal funding; however, the state has repeatedly failed to commit its share of matching funds;

Whereas in November 2017, the with support of Governor Baker and the legislature, the state approved \$199 million to build a new 154-bed long-term care facility at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home; while disregarding the long-documented deficiencies at Holyoke;

Whereas the lack of sufficient space and staff were contributing factors in the rapid spread of the Novel Coronavirus-19 at the Home, which resulted in 76 Veterans who tested for positive for COVID-19 and subsequently died, in one of our country's worst tragedies;

Whereas the administration and legislature have failed to provide equal treatment of all Veterans by ignoring the long documented unsafe conditions and understaffing at Holyoke while it has funded a new facility at Chelsea as well as providing a budget far exceeding that of Holyoke.

Whereas all Veterans in Massachusetts State state-funded Veteran Homes deserve equal treatment; the same living conditions, in full compliance with U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs standards; and proportionate funding to provide a safe level of staffing;

NOW, THEREFORE, *BE IT RESOLVED*, the Board of Selectmen in the Town of Monson, Massachusetts urges Governor Baker and the Legislature to expedite the design of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke to allow for the construction of fully compliant rooms for 250 Veterans, including a full toilet and shower in each room; the establishment of an Adult Day Health Care Program; and increased funding to ensure sufficient staff, equipment and supplies to provide the best in care for "those who have borne the battle" and sacrificed their safety and well-being to preserve our nation's freedom.



Dr. Richard M. Smith, Chair



Edward S. Harrison, Vice Chair



Mary K. Hull, Member