



MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

CHARTERED BY CONGRESS

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January 25, 2018

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly
2238 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly:

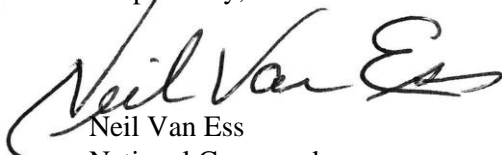
On behalf of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), whose membership is comprised entirely of combat wounded veterans, I am pleased to offer our support for H.R. 1928, the *Families of Fallen Servicemembers First Act*, which would ensure that military surviving families do not experience any delays in receiving death gratuities and related benefits in the event of a government shutdown.

When a servicemember dies on active duty, his or her family is entitled to a tax free payment of \$100,000, known as the death gratuity. Bereaved military families rely on this money to meet any financial hardships they may incur, immediately following the loss of their loved one. Like you, MOPH strongly believes that no family entitled to this relatively modest benefit should ever have to experience a delay in payment, simply because Congress temporarily fails to perform its primary duty of funding the U.S. Government.

When servicemembers put on the uniform each day, whether in combat or in peacetime, they take comfort in the fact that their families' basic needs will be met, should something happen to them. Under no circumstances should political gridlock ever put those families in financial jeopardy. Your legislation would prevent this from ever happening again, ensuring that this sacred promise to those who serve our nation is kept.

MOPH thanks you for your leadership on this issue, and your commitment to servicemembers, veterans and their families. We look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of this important legislation.

Respectfully,



Neil Van Ess
National Commander