

**MILITARY /VETERANS COALITION OF INDIANA
2010 GOALS**

1. To continue to monitor the operation of the Indiana Affairs Trust Fund/ Veterans Benefits Board and assure appointed board members have the long term vision as to achieve full development of supported programs and institutions. To propose additional fund sources for the trust fund to include:

- a. A check bloc on State Income Tax forms to enable taxpayers to donate all or part of tax refunds.
- b. Institution of a Lottery scratch off card with proceeds payable to the Trust.

Rationale: *The recent passage of SEA 480 in 2008 provided for the consolidation of the Trust and Relief Fund boards. Current Board appointees do not fully meet the guidance of the Trust Fund board members as recommended by SB480.*

2. To secure full State Income tax exempt status for all federal military and military retiree income.

Rationale: *Military retirees and active service members are a major economic force bringing to the State over one billion dollars per year in disposable income. Every effort should be made and incentives developed to attract military retirees and veterans to Indiana. Indiana continues to lose qualified veterans because of the greatly enhanced benefits available in adjacent and other states. Attempts to improve this situation by the 207th General Assembly have had little effect of attracting veterans and retirees to Indiana or stemming the outflow of serving service members.*

3. To secure legislative approval for an Indiana State Resettlement/Service Bonus and/or combat duty pay of \$ 1,000 for National Guard, Reserves, and Active Force members who are residents of Indiana and have served in a combat zone during the Gulf Wars.

Rationale: *Indiana service members deserve recognition and compensation for their personal sacrifice and economic hardships caused by unit activation and family separation.*

4. To establish a death benefit of \$150,000 to be paid to family members of Indiana service members who have died as a result of armed conflict in Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Rationale: *It is only fitting that Indiana join other states in recognizing the loss of her sons and daughters who die in battle serving our country.*

5. To invite attention to the low budget and management priority afforded the Indiana State Veterans Home in the areas of patient acquisition, patient care and capital site improvements.

Rationale: *This home has experienced long term construction delays, and a low priority by the Dept. of Public Works. This has resulted in limitations on patient care, an inability to use large sections of the physical plant, and implementation of Veterans Long Range Capital Improvement Plan.*

6. To continue support for the enhancement of the Weir Cook display at the Indianapolis International Airport

Rationale: *The patriotism and contributions of Indiana heroes is being lost to present and future generation. An appropriate display serves to educate the travelers on the contributions of Colonel H. Weir Cook - a true Hoosier hero.*

7. Encourage the citizenry to purchase Hoosier Veteran and Support Our Troops vanity license plates.

Rationale: *Funds raised are contributed to both the Veterans Affairs Trust and the Military*

Benefits Board.

8. Continue to monitor State programs in support to the federal Veterans Administration's efforts to improve the poor position of accessing Federal Disability Compensation payments.

Rationale: *Indiana has been ranked #44 of 50 states in the administration of this program. (Ref: VA Inspector General 2005 Report for the Defense Analysis Disability Compensation Dept. of Veterans Affairs). This results in qualified Hoosier veterans being denied and/or delayed deserved compensation. Delays and errors in processing claims have resulted in millions of dollars lost to disabled Hoosier veterans over the years. Indiana must redesign their current programs to compliment the recent. positive change in the Federal processing system.*