

Substitute for House Resolution No. 191.

A resolution of support for the initiative to bring the first Fisher House to Michigan.

Whereas, Michigan boasts among its citizens more than 640,000 veterans, many of whom have recently returned home from service in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, The Veterans' Affairs Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAHS) provides state-of-the-art healthcare for veterans living in a 15-county area of Michigan and northwest Ohio. The VAAHS provides more than 800,000 outpatient visits and more than 5,000 episodes of inpatient care at the hospital and extended care center annually. Rated the second-best Veterans' Affairs medical center in the United States, the VAAHS also serves as a referral center for specialty care, providing critical medical treatment that is not available in other nearby VA facilities, including trans-aortic valve replacement, deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's Disease, and access to the Traumatic Brain Injury Center; and

Whereas, Many VAAHS patients travel a long distance to receive care, which can present a significant barrier to healthcare for these veterans, their families, and caregivers. Between 200 and 300 families per month request lodging at the VAAHS for the purpose of traveling with their veteran as he or she receives care; and

Whereas, The Fisher House Program provides lodging free of charge to families of VA patients. There are currently 73 Fisher Houses located in 28 states and the District of Columbia, but none in Michigan. Establishing a facility near the VAAHS that can act as a "home away from home" for family members of patients receiving medical care will go a long way toward providing support and encouragement for both patients and their families, thus significantly improving patient outcomes; and

Whereas, The VA has approved a Fisher House location at the VAAHS and in May 2016, Fisher House Michigan, a nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code, was formed with the purpose of bringing the first Fisher House to Michigan. The construction of a Fisher House in Ann Arbor will be funded by a \$5 million capital campaign by Fisher House Michigan, as well as matching funds from the Fisher House Foundation, a nationwide nonprofit organization; and

Whereas, Once complete, the Fisher House at the VAAHS will provide 5,840 nights of free lodging to veterans' family members and caregivers each year; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we support the initiative to bring the first Fisher House to Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Veterans' Affairs Ann Arbor Healthcare System, the Board of Directors of Fisher House Michigan organization, and the President of the Fisher House Foundation.