

SR36, As Adopted by Senate, September 12, 2017

Senators Warren, Colbeck, Gregory, Emmons, Rocca and Schuitmaker offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 36.

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

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

Whereas, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAHS) provides state-of-the-art health care for veterans living in a 15-county area of Michigan and northwest Ohio; and

Whereas, The VAAHS also serves as a referral center for specialty care, providing critical medical treatment that is not available in other nearby Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities, including trans-aortic valve replacement, deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's Disease, and access to the Traumatic Brain Injury Center; and

Whereas, Each year, the VAAHS serves veterans by providing more than 800,000 outpatient visits and more than 5,000 episodes of inpatient care at the hospital and extended care center; and

Whereas, The VAAHS is rated the second-best VA medical center in the United States; and

Whereas, Many VAAHS patients travel a long distance to receive care, which can present a significant barrier to health care for these veterans and their families and caregivers; and

Whereas, 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, Family support and engagement has been shown to significantly improve patient outcomes; and

Whereas, The Fisher House Program provides a free-of-charge "home away from home" for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers; and

Whereas, There are currently 71 Fisher Houses located in 27 states, but none in Michigan; and

Whereas, The Department of Veterans Affairs has approved a Fisher House location at the VAAHS; and

Whereas, 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; and

Whereas, In November 2016, the Department of Veterans Affairs

and the Fisher House Foundation approved building a Fisher House at the VAAAHHS; and

Whereas, The construction 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 it is complete, the Fisher House at the VAAAHHS will provide 5,840 nights annually of free lodging to veterans' family members and caregivers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we recognize and commend the work that is being done to bring a Fisher House to the VAAAHHS; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage the citizens of Michigan to support these efforts; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Fisher House Foundation and Fisher House Michigan.