SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

# SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION No. 80

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 19, 2020

The Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Joint Resolution No. 80.

This Joint Resolution calls upon Congress to release funds to offset COVID-19 related losses to the veteran memorial homes operated by the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA).

DMVA operates three veteran memorial homes. The homes are located in Paramus, Menlo Park, and Vineland. Collectively, the three memorial homes accommodate approximate 950 veterans, spouses, and the spouses and parents of veterans killed in action. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the residents and staff at the memorial homes. There have been staff and residents infected by the virus, as well as staff and resident deaths related to the virus.

COVID-19 has caused a financial hardship to DMVA because of the lost revenue due to a prohibition on new admittances, overtime and contract nursing care, food shortages, and costs related to personal protective equipment. The economic loss to DMVA is projected to be more than $15 million dollars. It is imperative that Congress provide COVID-19 related funding to DMVA for its memorial homes so that the residents have a safe environment, and DMVA can fully and properly operate the memorial homes.

In addition, federal funding is urgently needed to rebuild the decaying memorial homes. The Vineland veteran memorial home was rebuilt and rededicated in 2005, while the Paramus and Menlo Park locations are decades old. Our veterans and their families have sacrificed so much. They should not have to suffer because of COVID-19 related shortages, or live in decaying buildings.