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Dear Veterans,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your members for your service to our Country and for the sacrifices that you have made on behalf of freedom and democracy around the world. We owe you, and everyone who has ever worn the uniform of the United States Armed forces, a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid.

As your Surrogate, I wanted to reach out to you directly, because I firmly believe that our Veterans should have unencumbered access to the resources of the Surrogate's Court. Serious issues such as the importance of wills, probate procedures, administration of estates, estate tax consequences, powers of attorney, medical directives and guardianships are vital topics of discussion for all of our families, and my office deals with these issues daily. It is very important to my staff and I that your families will be taken care of and that your money and property will live on in a manner of your own design.

Since taking office, I have been in direct contact with tens of thousands of Bergen County residents, in an effort to raise awareness and understanding of these important issues. I would be happy to speak with your members in person on these topics at any of your meetings or special events, to explain some of the documents that are important to the probate process and to answer any questions that they may have.

Should you wish to schedule a speaking engagement, it would be my privilege and pleasure to help you and your loved ones to understand how to plan for the legacy that you have served with honor to protect. So, please do not ever hesitate to call on us in your time of need. Our telephone number is **(201) 646-2252**. I assure you that you will receive the honor, respect and reception that you deserve. For more resources, please check below or visit our main page at: <http://www.bergencountysurrogate.com>.

Very truly yours,

Michael R. Dressler  
Bergen County Surrogate

## **IMPORTANT RESOURCES:**

### **Veterans Crisis Line**

Most importantly, should you or a member of your family ever need professional help, do not hesitate to call the Veterans Crisis Line: <http://www.Veteranscrisisline.net/>. Their website will help you to identify danger signs of suicidal behavior. The men and women of our Armed Forces have fought too hard sacrificed too much for us to turn our backs in their hour of need.

### **Bergen County Division of Veterans Services**

You may wish to contact the Bergen County Division of Veterans Services via telephone at 201-336-6325 or email at [Veterans@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:Veterans@co.bergen.nj.us). The men and women with the Division are on the ground working hard for the men and women of our Armed Forces every day, and they are in the best position to provide you with the resources you may require to address a specific need. Of particular interest is the fact that they maintain a list of available employment opportunities, and regularly call on industry and organizations seeking employment opportunities for Veterans through the Hire-a-Vet Program (201-336-6329).

### **2016 NEW JERSEY VETERANS GUIDE**

I strongly recommend you examine the 2016 New Jersey Veterans Guide at the following website: <http://www.nj.gov/military/veterans/njguide/2016-NJ-Veterans-Benefits-Guide.pdf>. This guide contains useful information for Veterans and family members with everything from how to obtain a replacement Veterans identification card (VIC) to the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program. You may be interested in such programs as "HELMETS TO HARDHATS," which places men and women from the Armed Forces into building and construction careers ([www.helmetstohardhats.org](http://www.helmetstohardhats.org)) or "TROOPS TO TEACHERS," which assists military personnel transitioning to a new career as a public school teacher ([www.proudtoserveagain.com](http://www.proudtoserveagain.com)). The contact information on these programs (and others) may be found in this guide.

### **Hiring Our Heroes**

You may be interested in Hiring Our Heroes, a nationwide program designed to help Veterans traverse the job market providing networking opportunities at career fairs. According to their website, <http://www.uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes>:

"To date, more than 27,200 Veterans and military spouses have obtained jobs through Hiring Our Heroes events. More than 2,000 companies of all sizes have committed to hire 707,000 Veterans and military spouses as part of the Hiring 500,000 Heroes campaign. Of those commitments, there have been more than 500,000 confirmed hires."

## Survivors' Support Organizations & Resources

The last aspect of honorable service in the armed forces that any of us want to confront is the possibility that we may lose someone we love who has made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our cherished liberty and our way of life. So, when our friends, families and neighbors must face this reality, it is important that they are equipped with every available resource and that they are aware of the support that is in place to address their needs. Here are just some of those resources and support groups:

Resources:

<http://www.military.com/benefits/survivor-benefits/survivors-resource-list.html>

Support Organizations:

<http://www.military.com/benefits/survivor-benefits/survivor-support-organizations.html>

## U.S. Department of Labor

The United States Department of Labor maintains a useful site for our Veterans with important information on job training, grants and employment opportunities, as well as resources that help to combat homelessness and educate our Veterans and their families on the benefits that are available to them here: <http://www.dol.gov/vets/>

The screenshot displays the 'Veterans' Employment and Training Service' (VETS) page on the U.S. Department of Labor website. The page features a navigation menu with links for 'A to Z', 'Site Map', 'FAQs', 'Forms', 'About DOL', 'Contact Us', and 'Español'. The main content area is titled 'VETS Programs & Services' and includes a mission statement: 'VETS is committed to helping America's veterans and separating service members by preparing them for meaningful careers, providing employment resources and expertise, and protecting their employment rights.' The page is organized into several sections: 'Employment Services' (listing American Job Centers, Find Your Path, Veterans Employment Center, and Veteran's Preference), 'Programs & Services' (listing My Next Move, Transition Assistance Program (TAP), USERRA, and Women Who Served), 'Fact Sheets' (listing Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), National Veterans' Training Institute, and Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP)), 'Competitive & State Grants' (listing Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), Incarcerated Veterans' Transition Program (IVTP), Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVS), Stand Down, and Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP)), and 'VETS-4212' (listing Federal Contractor Reporting). A sidebar on the left contains links for 'About VETS', 'Veterans', 'Hire a Veteran', 'Service Providers', 'Programs', and 'Resources'.

**N.J.S.A. 22A:2-32**

**Persons dying while in service in time of war or emergency; fees for probating will or granting administration or guardianship in certain cases**

Whenever it shall appear by affidavit of persons applying for letters testamentary, of administration or of guardianship that the estate, real and personal, of any testator, intestate, minor or ward, does not exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), and that such testator or intestate died while in the active military or naval service of the United States in time of war, or in time of emergency, or that such minor or ward is the child of a person who died while in the active military or naval service of the United States in time of war, or in time of emergency, no fees shall be charged upon actions for the probate of a will in those cases, where any part of the estate of the testator is bequeathed or devised to the surviving spouse, the father or mother, the brothers or sisters or any of the lineal descendants of the testator, granting of administration or guardianship up to and including the letters issued and copies of such letters; but if it shall afterwards appear in any case that the value of the estate, real and personal, exceeds or exceeded one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), then such estate shall be liable for and pay the fees that would have been collected if this section were not law.

As used in this section the term "in time of emergency" shall mean and include any time after June twenty-third, one thousand nine hundred and fifty, and prior to the termination, suspension or revocation of the proclamation of the existence of a national emergency issued by the President of the United States on December sixteenth, one thousand nine hundred and fifty, or termination of the existence of such national emergency by appropriate action of the President or Congress of the United States.

L.1953, c. 22, p. 412, s. 11.

**The VFW**

<http://www.vfw.org/>

Founded in 1899, The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has served as a voice to enact necessary change in the interest of America's bravest. This inimitable organization has enabled millions in their quest for knowledge, empowered our most courageous and deserving citizens in their hour of need and provided a community for those whose honorable service we owe an eternal debt of gratitude. The VFW offers assistance with VA claims, college scholarship programs, financial assistance programs and community service initiatives, along with a myriad of other services and benefits for its members. Much like the men and women who have fought to preserve our freedom, this organization simply makes the United States a better place to live and to raise a family.

**The American Legion**

<http://www.legion.org/>

The American Legion is more than a network America's bravest; it is a river of support and a way of life for millions of Americans "committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome programs in our communities, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service members and veterans." Among their many devotions, The Legion provides help with VA claims, assistance in finding employment, and support for current members of the military and financial advice.