

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 882

By Rich

A RESOLUTION to recognize and commend CreatiVets for its therapeutic support of disabled veterans.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is pleased to recognize and commend those community-based organizations and associations that exist and operate to improve the well-being of citizens in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable organization deserving of this body's attention is CreatiVets, a non-profit organization based in Washburn, Illinois, dedicated to providing disabled veterans with the opportunity to use art therapy, music, and creative writing to address the psychological and emotional needs that arise from combat-related trauma; and

WHEREAS, in search of relief from his own emotional scars that were resultant of traumatic brain injuries suffered in four separate IED (improvised explosive devices) explosions while serving in Iraq, United States Marine Richard Casper was blessed to find healing in art and music; and

WHEREAS, ecstatic at the benefit he reaped, he resolved to pursue a pathway that could lead his comrades who had returned from war with scars, both seen and unseen, to a place of greater personal acceptance and wholeness; and

WHEREAS, in consultation with award-winning Nashville songwriter Mark Irwin, CreatiVets was organized in 2013, and to date, at least nine veterans have traveled to Nashville and worked with Irwin and other professional songwriters, sharing words and emotions of their wartime experiences and their stories of pain, injury, trauma, and loss, which the songwriters have then transformed into songs and recordings for others to hear; and

WHEREAS, it is most beneficial for the veterans to fully express the feelings they have tried to repress and process for so long; the release they find in artistic expression is almost

magical and makes their journey to letting go of pain and returning to normalcy more possible than at any time since they departed the Middle East battlefields; and

WHEREAS, without exception, CreatiVets' alumni who have made the excursion to Nashville and engaged in music writing sessions have reported that the therapeutic qualities of art are far better than any traditional forms of therapy they have experienced, and for many, the experience is opening new vocational opportunities they have never even considered; and

WHEREAS, since its founding, CreatiVets has enjoyed growth in support commensurate with the growing public knowledge of its existence and its mission. The vision for the organization is to one day open a facility in Nashville that will be available to disabled veterans during times of struggling, so they can engage in many different forms of art in order to calm their anxieties; and

WHEREAS, this legislative body is, indeed, proud of the rich heritage that our State enjoys in the realm of music, especially the country music genre, and that pride is increased exponentially by knowing that certain Nashvillians and professional musicians for whom Nashville is their surrogate home are giving of themselves and their resources to lend aid to men and women of the United States Armed Forces in times when their need for relief is great; and

WHEREAS, the healing power of music and all forms of art is incredible, and it is fitting that this body recognize and commend Richard Casper and CreatiVets, the disabled soldiers relief organization he founded, for the manifold works of goodness they have delivered and intend to continue delivering to our injured and returning soldiers; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize and commend Richard Casper and his organization, CreatiVets, for the outstanding service they are providing to disabled veterans through art, music, and creative writing, and extend our most sincere good wishes to him and the organization for monumental success in accomplishing their mission of healing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.