



HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

Form Submission Details

Sponsoring legislator's full name:

Rep. Matthew Bierlein

1. Cosponsoring legislators' names (if applicable):

Representative Ron Robinson

Representative Bill Schuette

Representative Timmy Beson

2. Intended legislatively directed spending item recipient:

The Michigan Heroes Museum

3. Physical address of legislatively directed spending item recipient and the intended location of the project or activity:

1250 Weiss St, Frankenmuth, MI 48734

4. The recipient's employer identification number:

FEIN: 38-2127945

5. Requested amount of the legislatively directed spending item:

432,700.00

6. What is the purpose and how does the legislatively directed spending item provide a public benefit that is an appropriate use of taxpayer money?

The purpose of the legislatively directed spending is for the Michigan Heroes Museum to continue an ongoing project to digitize our more than 900 stories of Michigan heroes from all five branches of the military and space program. Currently our museum has predominantly static, physical displays of our heroes with basic write ups that share the personal stories of heroism, leadership and sacrifice – sometimes the ultimate sacrifice – of ordinary Michigan men and women thrust into extraordinary circumstances. Our digitization projects allow us to add

professional audio and video to the stories to ‘bring them to life’ for not only our guests that come to the museum, but also share these amazing stories online. This benefits the public by creating greater access. Additional benefits to the public include providing more ways to learn this important history. The audio and video versions benefit our K-12 educational programs by enabling us to share the stories in more dynamic ways, and with those who may not be strong readers. Our K-12 educational programs also help us inspire the next generation of Michigan’s heroes. Michigan Heroes Museum believes that sharing this heritage is vital to understanding our past and preserving our future. This project is for the public good and does not violate Article IV, S 30 of the Michigan Constitution.

7. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received or been awarded any of the following types of funding in the past 5 years? If so, how much? Check all that apply.

Federal 215,800

8. Estimated time frame for completion of the legislatively directed spending item project:

Spring 2026 thru Spring 2027

9. Has the nonprofit corporation continuously operated in this state for the preceding 36 months?

Yes

10. Has the nonprofit corporation had a physical office in this state for not less than the preceding 12 consecutive months?

Yes

11. Does the nonprofit corporation have a board of directors?

Yes

12. List all of the officers and active members on the board of directors:

Michigan Heroes Museum Board of Directors:

Michelle Franks	Board President and Financial Advisor and Director of Distribution at Fidelity
Neil Kirby	Board Vice President and Director of E-Commerce Product Operations at Meijer
Scott Furtaw	Board Treasurer and Sr. Controls Engineer at Nexteer Automotive
Ronald Daniel	Board Secretary and Retired Chemical Engineer and 35-year Army veteran
David Johnston	past board president & Retired Business Owner, IGA Grocery in Frankenmuth
Branden Minuth	past board president and First Vice President of Merrill Lynch Wealth
Jon Bozich	US Navy Veteran and Retired Detroit Fire Fighter and Chief Arson Investigator
Cathy Cooper	Executive Director, Meijer LPGA Classic
Russell Coy-Burt	Veteran of the Royal Air Force and Retired Sr. Financial Advisor of Merrill Lynch
Brian Hauenstein	Owner, Oasis Sr Advisors of Grand Rapids
Eric Hipple	Former QB – Detroit Lions, and Professional Speaker - Mental Health Advocate
Greg Johnson	Astronaut and F-16 Test Pilot at Lockheed Martin
Mark Johnston	Owner, T-Dub’s Restaurant and T-Dub’s North Catering in Frankenmuth
John Kulhavi	US Army Brigadier General (Ret), and Co-Author of “No Soldier Left Behind”.
Adam LaMay	Retired SGM Army Veteran and retired Michigan Department of Corrections
Brad McKinnon	IT Professional at Motor City Casino, Detroit, MI
Adele Martin	Sr. Organizational Change Consultant at DTE Energy & Principle of Willis Sausage
Joshua Norman	Executive Director, Grand Rapids Rotary
Lu Paletta	Retired Financial Advisor and Adjunct Professor of Finance at Aquinas College
Jill Shorkey	Director of Outreach, Go Great.com
Karen Straffon	Philanthropist, and Committee on 2026 Detroit Medal of Honor Convention
Meghan Valentine	Merrill Financial, CRPC Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor

13. "I certify that my immediate family members, legislative staff members, and I have no direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the requested legislatively directed spending item."

"I certify that the intended recipient of this legislatively directed spending item is not a for-profit entity."

"I certify that the information in this form is true to the best of my knowledge."

Rep. Matthew Bierlein



CASTLE | SAGINAW
MUSEUM | of COUNTY
HISTORY

Historical Society of Saginaw County

500 Federal Ave. • Saginaw, Michigan 48607

Telephone: (989) 752-2861

Chairperson
Brad Jarvis, Ph.D.

Vice-Chairperson
Tamara Carter

Treasurer
Amy French, Ph.D.

Secretary
Kathy Gonzales

Executive Committee
Jack Tany

Directors
Robert Emrich, Ph.D.
Hon. Elian Fichtner
Joaquin Guerrero
Chip Hendrick
Bryan Konieczka
Alex Mixter
Dorian Phelps
Larry Rodarte
Delena Spates-Allen

President/CEO
Jonathan T. Webb

Dear Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for state funding for the Michigan Heroes Museum, located in Frankenmuth. This extraordinary institution is truly one of a kind in the State of Michigan. It stands as a powerful tribute to the everyday heroes from throughout our state who went above and beyond in service to our nation—whether in the armed forces or in the United States space program.

For more than 20 years, I have been personally involved with the Michigan Heroes Museum and have witnessed firsthand the profound impact it has on visitors of all ages. As CEO of the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History, I consider it an incredibly valuable cultural and educational resource within our state's broader historical community. The museum does far more than display artifacts; it tells deeply human stories of courage, sacrifice, innovation, and dedication. These are stories of neighbors, classmates, and family members—individuals who may have come from small towns or big cities across Michigan but who made an outsized impact on our nation and the world.

There is no other museum in Michigan dedicated specifically to honoring our state's military personnel and space pioneers in this personal and comprehensive way. Students who visit leave with a stronger understanding of service and citizenship. Veterans and their families find recognition and respect. Communities see their own reflected in the larger story of our state and country.

The Michigan Heroes Museum is a very special place. We must ensure that it remains vibrant and accessible for future generations. I respectfully urge you to provide the funding necessary to sustain and strengthen this irreplaceable Michigan treasure.

Sincerely,

Jonathan T. Webb

President/CEO Castle Museum of Saginaw County History

February 23, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature:

I am writing in support of the Michigan Heroes Museum in Frankenmuth as you consider funding allocations for institutions that preserve our state's history and expand educational opportunities for Michigan students. As a retired superintendent of the Frankenmuth School District—and now a member of the Museum's Board of Directors—I have witnessed the museum's impact on learners, families, and communities across our state for nearly three decades.

The Michigan Heroes Museum is the only institution in the nation dedicated exclusively to the stories of Michigan's military veterans and space pioneers. Its mission is both simple and profound: to preserve the personal histories of Michiganders who served with courage, innovation, and sacrifice, and to ensure that their stories remain accessible to future generations. These are not distant historical figures; they are our neighbors, our relatives, and our fellow citizens whose experiences shaped our state and our nation.

Throughout my career in education, I saw firsthand how deeply students connect with the museum's exhibits and stories. For many young people, a visit to this museum is their first meaningful encounter with Michigan's military and space history. These experiences help students understand service, citizenship, and the cost of the freedoms they enjoy. They leave with a sense of pride in Michigan's contributions and a greater appreciation for the individuals who made them possible.

The museum's leadership is committed to expanding access and strengthening its educational reach. Their priorities include:

- developing curriculum-aligned resources for teachers across Michigan,
- expanding both in-person and virtual learning opportunities,
- preserving fragile historical materials for long-term use, and
- reducing barriers for schools with limited transportation or field trip budgets.

These efforts require sustainable support. Legislative funding would allow the museum to broaden its statewide impact, enhance its educational programming, and continue safeguarding the stories of Michigan's heroes.

As you make decisions about state investments, I respectfully urge you to consider the Michigan Heroes Museum as a worthy and forward-thinking partner. Its mission aligns with the values of education, civic responsibility, and historical preservation—values that strengthen our communities and enrich our state.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to supporting institutions that help Michigan's students learn, grow, and understand the legacy they inherit.

Sincerely,

Adele Martin

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adele R. Martin".

Board Member, Michigan Heroes Museum

Michael V. Grobbel
Polar Bear Memorial Association
49997 Lexington Ave. East
Shelby Township, MI 48317

February 25, 2026

Michigan Capitol
100 North Capitol Ave.
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature,

As president of the Polar Bear Memorial Association, I've had many interactions with the Michigan Heroes Museum over the past 20 years. I can attest that they operate strictly in accordance with their mission, which is to honor, respect and remember Michigan citizens' personal contributions to our nation's military and space programs. Notably, their business has received Candid's Platinum Transparency award for 2025 and preceding years.

In my opinion, the Michigan Heroes Museum would be a worthy recipient of any state funding you could provide.

Sincerely,

Michael V. Grobbel

Michael V. Grobbel
President, Polar Bear Memorial Association

24 Feb 2026

To: the Honorable Members of the State of Michigan House of Representatives,
From: Astronaut Jerry M. Linenger

Subject: Urgent Request for One-Time Funding for the Michigan Heroes Museum

I strongly advocate for critical, one-time funding for the Michigan Heroes Museum—a vital educational resource and profound tribute to Michigan's service members.

As a proud Michigan native, Naval Officer, and NASA Astronaut, I am honored to be included in its displays. But my sacrifice to country pales in comparison with the Michigan Medal of Honor recipients on display. Those exhibits are powerful, tangible lessons in valor, patriotism, and duty. The museum's motto, **Honor. Respect. Remember.**, perfectly embodies our responsibility to preserve these legacies.

I urge the State of Michigan House of Representatives to approve this one-time funding. Investing in this institution honors our history and strengthens our future character.

Thank you for your commitment to the heroes of Michigan.

Very respectfully,

(Electronically signed)

Jerry M. Linenger, M.D., M.S.S.M, M.P.H., PhD.
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
U.S. Astronaut/Mir Cosmonaut

February 23, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature:

I am writing in support of the Michigan Heroes Museum in Frankenmuth as you consider funding allocations for organizations that preserve Michigan's heritage and strengthen communities across our state. My name is Philip Martin, and I am the owner of Willi's SmokeHaus & Deli and the Gera Tavern, two long-standing small businesses that serve residents and visitors in mid-Michigan. As a business owner in Frankenmuth, I see every day how important the museum is to our community, our local economy, and the families who visit our city.

From a business perspective, the museum plays a vital role in supporting local tourism and strengthening the economic health of our region. Visitors who come to learn about Michigan's heroes also dine in our restaurants, shop in our stores, and explore our city. The museum's ability to attract and educate guests has a direct and positive impact on small businesses like mine, as well as on the broader hospitality and retail sectors that sustain our community.

As you evaluate funding priorities, I respectfully urge you to consider the Michigan Heroes Museum as a valuable partner in preserving Michigan's history, supporting statewide education, and strengthening local economies. The museum is a point of pride for our community and a resource that benefits residents, students, and visitors alike.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to supporting institutions that enrich Michigan's cultural and economic landscape.

Sincerely,
Philip Martin
Owner, Willi's SmokeHaus & Deli
Owner, Gera Tavern

Brewster H. Shaw, Jr.
3911 Oberlin St
Houston, TX 77005
February 25, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature,

As a native of Cass City, Michigan, a retired Colonel in the United States Air Force, and a former NASA astronaut, I am writing to express my unwavering support for the Michigan Heroes Museum in Frankenmuth.

This institution is not merely a collection of artifacts; it is the heartbeat of our state's history, uniquely dedicated to honoring the personal stories of Michigan citizens who answered the call to serve in our nation's military and space programs.

The Michigan Heroes Museum holds profound significance for our state and community in three critical ways:

- **A Living Tribute to Michigan's Finest:** The museum is the only repository in the nation focused exclusively on the wartime experiences of a single state's people. With over 900 individual stories, it transforms "The Past" into a living memory, ensuring that the sacrifices of our neighbors—from the Spanish-American War to the War on Terrorism—are never forgotten. It also houses the world's largest public collection of Medals of Honor, a testament to the extraordinary valor of Michigan's own.
- **Advancing Aerospace Education:** Beyond the battlefield, the museum plays a vital role in inspiring future generations by showcasing Michigan's pioneers in space exploration. As someone whose own uniform, flight suit and Space Shuttle mission artifacts are preserved within its walls, I have seen how these displays ignite a passion for STEM and exploration in the youth who visit. New educational initiatives are expanding this reach through interactive features and online materials, making these stories accessible to students across the state.
- **Strengthening Community and Identity:** The museum serves as a bridge between the military and civilian worlds, illustrating the "ripple effect" of service on families and local communities. Through programs like the "Heroes Next Door" lectures and traveling displays, the museum brings the legacy of local heroes directly to schools, veteran groups, and civic clubs throughout Michigan.

I urge you to continue recognizing and supporting the Michigan Heroes Museum. It is a vital asset that preserves our heritage, educates our children, and honors the men and women who have secured our freedoms.

Sincerely,

Brewster H. Shaw, Jr.
Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
Former NASA Astronaut (STS-9, STS-61B, STS-28)



Frankenmuth School District

525 E. Genesee Street ■ Frankenmuth, Michigan 48734
Phone: 989.652.9958 ■ Fax: 989.652.9780

JoLynn Clark, Superintendent
www.fmuthschools.com

February 24, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature,

On behalf of the Frankenmuth School District, I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the Michigan Heroes Museum and its efforts to secure funding to continue and expand its work serving our community and communities across our state.

Educational experiences that connect students to real stories, real people, and real moments in history have a lasting impact far beyond what can be achieved through textbooks alone. The Michigan Heroes Museum provides visitors of all ages, including school-aged students, with meaningful opportunities to explore personal stories of courage, service, and sacrifice while gaining a deeper understanding of history and civic responsibility.

Over the years, students from our district have benefited from opportunities to engage with the museum through field experiences and service-learning opportunities. These experiences allow students to see history through a personal lens, fostering empathy, critical thinking, and a stronger appreciation for the individuals whose actions have shaped our communities and our nation.

Museums such as the Michigan Heroes Museum serve as valuable partners in education by extending learning beyond the classroom. They support curriculum connections while encouraging students to reflect on character, service, and the responsibilities of citizenship. The museum's accessibility to learners of all ages makes it a unique and important educational resource within Michigan.

Investment in institutions that preserve history while actively engaging future generations strengthens both education and community connection. Continued support for the Michigan Heroes Museum will help ensure that students and families across Michigan can continue to benefit from these authentic learning experiences.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of educational opportunities that enrich learning for Michigan students.

Respectfully,

JoLynn Clark
Superintendent
Frankenmuth School District

To the Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature,

As a Michigan Gold Star Mother, the very proud mother of SPC Holly McGeogh who was KIA during Operation Iraqi Freedom in Kirkuk Iraq on January 31, 2004, I am writing to express my steadfast support for my favorite museum, The [Michigan Heroes Museum](#) that is located in [Frankenmuth](#).

This museum goes far beyond preserving artifacts. It serves as the living pulse of Michigan's history, committed to honoring the personal stories of the citizens who bravely served in our nation's military and space programs.

I ask you to support the Michigan Heroes Museum. After my daughter was killed, my deepest fear was that her memory would fade with time. Thanks to this museum, twenty-two years later she is not only remembered, she is honored—far beyond anything I ever expected. The museum is more than a building. It safeguards our shared heritage, teaches our children the meaning of sacrifice, and ensures that the men and women who defended our freedoms are never forgotten.

Sincerely,

Paula Love

Very Proud Mother of SPC Holly McGeogh

KIA Iraq 2004 (My Brave Little Soldier)

From: Michigan Rep. Tim Beson <timothybeson@house.mi.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 10:21 AM

To: John Auger <john.auger@miheroes.org>

Subject: Re: Military and Veterans: Appropriation For Michigan Heroes Museum

Dear John,

It's great to hear from you. I hope you and your family have been doing well. Thank you for reaching out and for the work you're doing with the Michigan Heroes Museum.

I appreciate you letting me know about the appropriation Rep. Matt Bierlein is putting forward. I'm happy to take a closer look at the request and keep it in mind as the budget process moves forward. It sounds like a great resource for our state and for the families connected to those stories that I would certainly support. These projects are usually decided by leadership in negotiations between the Governor, House and Senate, any of which I am not a part of. I will definitely speak to them and Rep. Bierlein about the project so they are aware of my support.

I would also enjoy stopping by the museum when my schedule allows. Thank you again for reaching out and for the work you're doing to preserve Michigan's history.

Best regards,

Office of Rep. Timmy Beson

TimothyBeson@house.mi.gov

517-373-0158