

May 25, 2016

Dear House Transportation Committee Members,

My husband fought in Vietnam and in 2009 was diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. It is one of the many "presumptive" illnesses from Agent Orange. The VA set him up with one of their doctors and after seeing him also discovered he had Ischemic Heart Disease and granted him 100% disability. Early in 2011 we learned of the 5 year, no cost, Disabled Vet (DV) license plate for all vets receiving at least 100% disability and went to Secretary of State with proper paperwork to receive this plate.

It is this license plate I am pleading with you to continue to receive. Steve, my husband, died from this leukemia in January of 2015. Michigan is one of the states that does not allow for this benefit to continue for the spouse. I do receive a property tax exemption as that benefit did pass down to me. I also still receive CHAMPVA insurance that is a real lifesaver saving me worries for medical help which also passed down to me. Many states already have this in place. My income decreased dramatically with his death and I need to know I don't have to worry about the yearly plate costs for my vehicle. His death was no fault of his nor was it of mine. I walked every step he took to fight this for 6 years including living in the hospital many times. I talked to the Veterans Affairs office here in Traverse City to see if I could get some stats on how many widows and widowers would benefit from this but the privacy act prevents me from learning those numbers. They did state to let them know the results of this bill because if it passes it would be a huge benefit to the many spouses of deceased vets in Michigan. The VA office did state these Vietnam vets are dying in "insane" numbers as we speak.

Thank you in advance,

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