

Letter of Interest for Reappointment to the Livingston County Veteran Services Committee

October 14, 2026

Livingston County Board of Commissioners
304 E. Grand River Avenue, Suite 201
Howell, MI 48843

Dear Commissioners:

I respectfully ask to be considered for reappointment to the Livingston County Veteran Services Committee when my current term expires on December 31, 2026. I have served on the committee since 2017, chaired it from 2018 through 2025, and now serve as vice chair. For nearly a decade, veteran service has been a central commitment in my life.

My perspective combines Army and Navy service, deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, veteran constituent casework in Congress, nonprofit leadership, and municipal administration. As Brighton Charter Township Clerk, I oversee elections, records, staff, and department budgets as a member of a seven-person elected board. I co-founded VETLIFE and its Vet Fest, described as Michigan's largest free festival for veteran families, and served as vice president of Blue Star Service Dogs. I am a member of the Howell American Legion, Brighton VFW, Disabled American Veterans, and Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association.

Under my leadership, and through the work of fellow committee members, staff, and county partners, Livingston developed a premier veteran services office. We moved into a more visible, welcoming setting with private offices, a computer lab, laundry facilities, a library, and community meeting space. The office reported a record 1,677 VA claims, more than 100 outreach events, and \$112,010 in emergency relief in 2025. Those results belong to the team; I am proud of my role in guiding and supporting its work.

I also identified a statewide privacy problem: veterans seeking assistance could be asked to discuss sensitive financial and personal circumstances in public. I developed the legislative idea, brought it to my state senator, Lana Theis, who sponsored Senate Bill 10 of 2021, and testified in support on behalf of the committee. It became Public Act 31 of 2021, permitting eligible application discussions in closed session at the applicant's request while keeping decisions public.

I will continue to ask direct questions, work constructively with the Board and department, and put veterans' interests first. My daughter joined the Navy this June. When she comes home, I want her and every other veteran to receive the excellent service Livingston now provides. Continuing this oversight would be an honor and a privilege. My résumé is enclosed, and I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my reappointment.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Riker
Vice Chair, Livingston County Veteran Services Committee