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**GOVERNOR LANDRY PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR MORE THAN 100,000
MILITARY AND VETERAN CAREGIVERS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP
WITH ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION**

NEW ORLEANS, La.—Governor Jeff Landry today pledged support for the more than 100,000 military and veteran caregivers in the state of Louisiana by joining the Elizabeth Dole Foundation’s Hidden Heroes Campaign, making Louisiana the 12th Hidden Heroes state in the nation. The campaign raises awareness and brings critical resources to military and veteran caregivers—referred to as hidden heroes—who care for wounded, ill or injured service members and veterans. Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Secretary Jerome Buller was joined by Elizabeth Dole Foundation CEO Steve Schwab, and local military and veteran caregivers at the National World War II Museum to announce this partnership.

Louisiana’s recognition as a Hidden Heroes state coincides with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation’s rollout of its latest RAND study, “America’s Military and Veteran Caregivers: Hidden Heroes Emerging from the Shadows,” in cities across the United States. The study revealed approximately 14.3 million military and veteran caregivers who provide care valued at a minimum of \$119 billion. In Louisiana, more than 30,000 veterans rely on family and friends for care, making up 12% of the state’s total veteran population. Researchers also found that more than 30,000 Louisiana veterans have an unmet need for care, underscoring significant caregiving needs.

“We have a duty as a nation to offer continuous support and care to each and every man and woman who have served in our Armed Forces,” said Gov. Landry, a veteran himself. We also know that many veterans will look to a family member or friend for care. To honor our military and veteran caregivers, First Lady Sharon Landry and I are proud to proclaim Louisiana as a Hidden Heroes state, solidifying our commitment to support our nation’s heroes.”

Launched in 2016 by Senator Elizabeth Dole and chaired by actor Tom Hanks, the Hidden Heroes Campaign uplifts the stories of military and veteran caregivers, seeks solutions for the challenges and long-term needs they face and connects them to one another. Working with individuals, businesses, communities and civic, faith and government leaders, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation’s Hidden Heroes Communities program represents a network of more than 200 communities nationwide committed to increasing awareness and support for military and veteran caregivers.

“Our primary responsibility as a state department of veterans affairs is to advocate for the betterment of the lives of veterans. Whether that comes in the form of securing VA benefits, providing end-of-life care or ensuring that our veterans have the educational and employment

opportunities they deserve, make no mistake, we will be unrelenting in these missions,” said Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Charlton Meginley, Col (Ret), USAF. “This mission includes taking care of veteran caregivers. Unfortunately, and for too long, the sacrifice and struggle that many caregivers undergo has been overlooked in society, which is why the mission of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation is so important. My grandfather, a Navy veteran, suffered from cancer directly related to his service. As a child, I personally witnessed the overwhelming toll his care took on both my grandmother, and my mom, and wished that she had help, not only for his care, but for hers, too. Because of our holistic approach to veterans and their families, it is our hope that our partnership with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation will create a much needed avenue for our military and veteran caregivers to obtain the resources and tools they need, not only to care for veterans, but themselves as well.”

“The Elizabeth Dole Foundation envisions an America where military caregivers are empowered, appreciated and recognized for their service to the nation. I have dedicated my life to this cause because I’ve seen first-hand the tremendous impact our nation’s caregivers make in the lives of their service members and veterans each and every day, in neighborhoods big and small,” said Elizabeth Dole Foundation Founder Senator Elizabeth Dole. “But their needs are overwhelming, and as a country, we must come together to find helpful ways to support them in their life-long journey of care. That begins by encouraging our caregivers to raise their hands, become a part of our Hidden Heroes Caregiver Community—it’s why our partnership with Louisiana is so important.”

“Louisiana is answering the call to support our hidden heroes. We are looking forward to our continued relationship with state and local leaders to create a lasting impact for military and veteran caregivers and their families,” said Elizabeth Dole Foundation CEO Steve Schwab. “We salute these great leaders for responding to the needs outlined in our historic 2024 RAND report, and we are thrilled to grow caregiver, veteran and family support efforts across the state.”

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation is the preeminent organization empowering, supporting and honoring our nation’s 14.3 million military and veteran caregivers—the spouses, parents, family members and friends—who care for America’s wounded, ill or injured service members and veterans at home. Founded by Senator Elizabeth Dole in 2012, the foundation adopts a comprehensive approach in its support and advocacy, working with leaders in the public, private, nonprofit and faith communities to recognize military caregivers’ service and support their well-being. The Foundation’s Hidden Heroes Campaign brings vital attention to the untold stories of military caregivers and provides a network for military caregivers to connect with their peers and access carefully vetted resources. Visit elizabethdolefoundation.org for more information.

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