

**MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART  
OF THE U.S.A.**



**THE ONLY CONGRESSIONALLY CHARTERED VETERANS ORGANIZATION  
EXCLUSIVELY FOR COMBAT-WOUNDED VETERANS**

**STATEMENT OF  
TRACEY BROWN-GREENE  
National Commander**

**BEFORE A JOINT HEARING OF THE  
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON VETERANS  
AFFAIRS**

**12 February 2026**

Chairman Moran, Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Blumenthal and Ranking Member Takano, distinguished members of the Veteran Affairs Committee, and esteemed leaders, I am honored and humbled to represent America's Purple Heart Veterans in addressing you today. I would like to begin by congratulating all new members of Congress and expressing my gratitude to those who have returned to serve and enhance the quality of life for our nation's Veterans. With our collective efforts, I am confident that the 119th Congress will make significant strides in supporting our nation's heroes.

Previous Congressional session passed pivotal legislation, such as the VA Accountability Act, PACT Act and COMPACT Act, which have made substantial improvements in various aspects of Veterans' lives. These measures have established a presumptive link between terminal diagnoses resulting from war-related activities, employment, education, digital modernization of VA services, housing, and caregiver support. This foundation will undoubtedly guide our progress during the 119th Congress.


Our nation's Veterans answered the call to protect us from the darkest threats the world has to offer. We implore this committee and the rest of Congress to consider passing further legislation that addresses the pressing needs of our Veterans. These include:




**The Military Medals Protection Act and Purple Heart Protection Act:** These measures aim to prevent Veterans from facing penalties when seeking alternative ways to continue serving our great nation. In addition, there are a plethora of non-Congressionally chartered organizations and businesses that are misusing/misrepresenting the medal's image and words Purple Heart for profit. Given that no organization other than the Military Order of the Purple Heart is the only Congressionally chartered organization to represent, protect, and preserve the honor of the Purple Heart, it calls on Congress to take decisive action to protect the integrity, honor, and ownership of the Purple Heart Medal by the Department of Defense and the Army Institute of Heraldry and restore the authorized use, given by the those two organizations, of the medal's image and trademark of the words "Purple Heart" to the MOPH. Please see the enclosed proposed Purple Heart Protection Act of 2026 and proposed Annual National Purple Heart Recognition Day proclamation.





**Major Richard Star Act:** Will amend Title 10, United States Code: To enable tens of thousands of combat-injured Veterans to collect the full benefits they've earned. However, the Military Order of the Purple Heart is deeply concerned by the increasingly loose, inaccurate, and misleading use of the term "combat wounded" by various individuals and organizations and is introducing a Resolution included in this packet requesting Congress take corrective action to protect the integrity, honor, and definition of the term Combat Wounded as it relates to those men and women who have received it..

 Fulfilling the Legacy Act: Seek to make significant changes to the Survivors Benefits Program that has been affecting the financial security of Veterans who have paid into the system, but who lose the premiums paid if the covered spouse dies first.


 Legacy Survivor and Catastrophically Disabled Veterans Benefits Expansion: DIC currently provides only \$1,650 per month. For the next five years, this bill would increase DIC by an additional 1% each year on top of inflation, helping over 500,000 families with their living expenses.


 Purple Heart Veterans Education Act of 2025 To authorize an individual who is awarded the Purple Heart for service in the Armed Forces to transfer unused Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to a family member, and for other purposes.

 Dental Care for Veterans Act: Will require the VA to furnish dental care in the same manner as any other medical service, and for other purposes.

 The National Green Alert Act: Originally introduced as HR 2797 in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress and should be reintroduced in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. This act would provide communities with resources to assist Veterans coping with the invisible wounds of war.

 Veterans' Healthcare Improvement Act of 2026: Aims to expand access to mental health services and specialized care for Veterans.

 Homeless Veterans Assistance Act: Provides additional resources for housing, job placement, and outreach to homeless Veterans. Provides additional resources for housing, job placement, and outreach to homeless Veterans

 Military Family Support Act: Expands support services for military families, including childcare and spousal employment.

1. Let's begin with addressing the need to pass **The Military Medals Protection Act**: George Washington himself established the Badge of Military Merit, the precursor to today's Purple Heart, recognizing the profound significance of military honors. This act grants the Department of Defense exclusive trademark authority over all military medals, safeguarding them from exploitation and preserving their symbolic value. Commercializing or misusing these symbols diminishes their essence. The 113th Congress recognized this sacredness when they passed the Stolen Valor Act. Now, let's collaborate to expand their protections and restore all trade and word marks to the DOD, managed by the Institute of Heraldry, ensuring their unimpaired safeguarding. In addition, given that no organization other than MOPH is congressionally chartered to represent, protect, and preserve the honor of the Purple Heart Medal passage of this legislation will allow the DoD and Army Institute of Heraldry to restore the authorized use of the medal's image and trademark of the words "Purple Heart" to the MOPH.

**2. SB 1032 and HR 2102: The Richard Star Act** will provide for concurrent receipt of Veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for disabled retirees with combat-related disabilities, and for other purposes. This includes Veterans who have received the Purple Heart for injuries received in combat and/or acts of terrorism, both domestically or foreign related. In addition, the term “combat wounded” has a long-standing, clearly defined meaning within the United States military, historically and legally referring solely to those service-members who were wounded as a direct result of enemy action, or who died from wounds sustained in combat, and who therefore are eligible for and awarded the Purple Heart Medal. The Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), is deeply concerned by the increasingly loose, inaccurate, and misleading use of the term “combat wounded” by various individuals and organizations; and therefore request Congress include MOPH as a mandatory stakeholder in any legislative discussions, hearings, advisory panels, or negotiations in which the term “combat wounded” is used, referenced, or applied—given that no organization other than MOPH is congressionally chartered to represent, protect, and preserve the honor of the Purple Heart. Please see proposed MOPH Amendment to the Richard Star Act.

**3. HR 6407: Legacy Survivor and Catastrophically Disabled Veterans Benefits Expansion:** DIC currently provides only \$1,650 per month. For the next five years, this bill would increase DIC by an additional 1% each year on top of inflation, helping over 500,000 families with their living expenses. If passed, this legislation will significantly raise the monthly benefits rate for catastrophically service-connected disabled Veterans with a traumatic brain injury or other severe disabilities that require regular, round the clock, in-home medical care, offering an additional \$10,000 annually. The first significant increase for this cohort of Veterans in decades

**4. HR 210: Dental Care for Veterans Act:** A long overdue piece of legislation Will require the VA to furnish dental care in the same manner as any other medical service, and for other purposes. Currently Veterans may only receive Veterans Affairs Dental Care only if they meet the current myriad of confusing number of qualifications. However, there are thousands of Veterans who need dental care but either does not qualify for VA provided Dental Care or cannot afford either VA or private Dental Care. This is an absolute travesty by denying much needed support to Veterans who have served this great nation. It is known and proven that by not taking care of one’s dental needs; it can lead to 15 systemic health issues, thereby emphasizing the importance of maintaining good dental hygiene.

**5. HR 2797 (116th Congress) The National Green Alert Act.** The statistics are alarming, with new studies revealing that up to 44 Veterans per day succumb to suicide, nearly double the previous estimates. While our AMBER Alert system has saved over 1,100 children and Silver Alerts have a 95% success rate, we lack a comparable system for our at-risk Veterans. All first responders need access to the life-saving tools and resources necessary to handle the evolving challenges of decades of war and service to our nation. Wisconsin demonstrated the effectiveness of this concept when they passed H.B. 473-2018. We must expand this crucial legislation nationally to ensure our nation’s heroes receive the support they deserve.

**6. HR 3676 (118<sup>th</sup> Congress): The Helping Homeless Assistance Act** aims to address the pressing issue of homelessness among Veterans. Provides additional resources for housing, job placement, and outreach to homeless Veterans. Reduces veteran homelessness and offers critical support. Approximately 33,000 Veterans will be sleeping on our streets tonight. A staggering 70% of homeless Veterans grapple with substance abuse, while 45% struggle with mental illness. This act

introduces revolutionary changes to VA healthcare by embracing alternative treatments, holistic approaches, and comprehensive mental health services. Moreover, dental care, which has been neglected within the VA, is prioritized. Unfortunately, several health conditions have been linked to poor oral health. We cannot continue to address the traumas of the 21st century with outdated solutions.

**7. The Fulfilling the Legacy Act** seeks to rectify a systemic failure that has been affecting Veterans' financial security. Consider the story of a 92-year-old Purple Heart recipient who diligently paid Survivor Benefit Plan premiums for decades, only to lose \$50,000 in premiums when his wife passed away. This is not an isolated incident but a clear indication of the need for action. This act modernizes the SBP, ensuring that Veterans' investments in their families' futures are protected.

**8. SB 342: Purple Heart Veterans Education Act of 2025:** Passage of this legislation will authorize an individual who is awarded the Purple Heart to transfer unused Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to a family member, and for other purposes.

**9. HR 4567: Veterans' Healthcare Improvement Act of 2026:** Aims to expand access to mental health services and specialized care for Veterans. Improves healthcare access and quality for Veterans.

**Call To Action:** In addition to our legislative priorities above, it will be remiss to not mention that Military retirees have already met all the requirements to earn their healthcare benefits, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart opposes any changes to TRICARE For Life that would increase fees and shift costs from the Department of Defense (DoD) to retirees over 65 years of age who rely on TRICARE For Life. In addition, The Military Order of the Purple Heart opposes any cuts to Veterans Affairs disability benefits. Lastly, Congress needs to pass legislation prohibiting the US Department of Veterans Affairs from reducing VA Disability Benefits when a Veteran files a new claim. Too many times when a new claim is opened, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) re-examines the Veteran's entire file and will look to reduce benefits rather than determine whether or not an increase is warranted based on the new claim. Many times the Veteran is not provided an opportunity to have a Predetermination Hearing to prevent the reduction or, does not learn of the reduction to his/her VA Disability Benefits until receipt of the VBA Decision Letter, if one is even sent. This must stop!

The cost of inaction extends beyond monetary losses; it involves the loss of lives, shattered families, and broken promises. Each day, 44 families tragically lose a veteran to suicide due to our delay. Every night, 33,000 Veterans who valiantly defended our nation find themselves sleeping on our streets. Moreover, countless military families face financial insecurity annually due to outdated benefit systems. Continuing to allow companies to profit while simultaneously penalizing the warriors who earned these prestigious awards diminishes the sacrifices made by our nation's warriors. These four acts represent more than mere policy changes; they embody our sacred moral obligation to those who have served.

From protecting the symbols of their sacrifice to saving lives in crisis, from revolutionizing their healthcare to securing their families' futures, each piece of legislation addresses critical gaps in our support for Veterans. As George Washington rightly recognized the importance of honoring those who

served under him, we too must recognize our duty to today's Veterans. The 119th Congress holds the opportunity and the obligation to transform how America cares for its heroes.

Which of you is ready to answer the call of our nation's heroes, as they did to defend our freedom and way of life? Let us set aside party politics and focus on the pressing issue at hand. The Military Order of the Purple Heart is seeking your support on the aforementioned acts.

## NATIONAL COMMANDER, MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART



**Tracey Brown-Greene** retired from the United States Army after serving on Active Duty for 22 years. She sustained combat-related injuries in Afghanistan because of an enemy attack in 2016. Her military awards and decorations reflect her outstanding service and sacrifice, including the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, and numerous other commendations.

Tracey was elected National Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart during 2025 at the 92nd National Convention in Reno, Nevada. A MOPH member since 2017, she previously has served as Chapter Commander, Department of Texas Commander, National Junior Vice Commander, and National Senior Vice Commander. In addition, Tracey served on multiple committees in the Order and as the MOPH FUND's Chairman of the Board.

In addition to her military accomplishments, Tracey is a dedicated scholar and lifelong learner. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Management from American Military University, a Master of Arts in Management and Leadership from Liberty University, a Graduate Certificate in Management from North Central University, and a certificate in Women's Entrepreneurship from Cornell University. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Business Administration with a concentration in Financial Management.

Tracey is deeply passionate about the well-being of military veterans and their families. She is a recipient of the Congressional Veterans Commendation and holds certification as a Master Life Coach. She is committed to fostering goodwill, camaraderie, and service among combat-wounded veterans and the broader veteran community.

Residing in Harker Heights, Texas, with her family, Tracey is active in numerous veterans and civic organizations. She also volunteers with local school district initiatives and participates in a wide array of community efforts. Tracey Brown-Greene is the epitome of a citizen-Soldier—dedicated, resilient, and committed to service both in and out of uniform.

## Amendment to the Richard Starr Act

**Whereas**, the term “combat wounded” has a long-standing, clearly defined meaning within the United States military, historically and legally referring solely to those service-members who were wounded as a direct result of enemy action, or who died from wounds sustained in combat, and who therefore are eligible for and awarded the Purple Heart Medal; and

**Whereas**, the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), a congressionally chartered veterans service organization founded in 1932 and dedicated exclusively to honoring, supporting, and advocating for Purple Heart recipients and the legacy of combat sacrifice, is deeply concerned by the increasingly loose, inaccurate, and misleading use of the term “combat wounded” by various individuals and organizations; and

**Whereas**, certain groups have publicly promoted the Richard Starr Act as a “combat wounded tax” or as legislation essential to protecting combat-wounded veterans, despite the fact that the bill does not define, address, or provide dedicated benefits to Purple Heart recipients or those actually wounded in combat; and

**Whereas**, the misuse of the term “combat wounded” to describe injuries unrelated to combat—such as training accidents, recreational injuries, or non-hostile incidents occurring within or outside a combat zone—diminishes the honor, meaning, and historical integrity of the Purple Heart Medal, and in some cases borders on or contributes to Stolen Valor, precisely the type of misrepresentation the Stolen Valor Act was created to prevent; and

**Whereas**, promoting legislation under the banner of “combat wounded” when it does not specifically benefit Purple Heart recipients misleads veterans, Congress, the media, and the American public, and risks eroding trust in the legislative process and in the organizations advocating for veterans; and

**Whereas**, the Military Order of the Purple Heart has repeatedly seen its name, its constituency, and its mission invoked—often inaccurately and without consultation—by organizations seeking to advance legislative efforts that do not directly support combat-wounded veterans, causing confusion and undermining MOPH’s congressionally mandated role as the guardian of the Purple Heart Medal and its meaning; and

**Whereas**, based on a review of the Richard Starr Act, the Military Order of the Purple Heart finds that the bill, while beneficial for a limited population of medically retired service-members, does little to nothing to directly assist those who are verifiably combat wounded as defined by Purple Heart eligibility criteria; and

**Whereas**, there is significant public confusion, fueled by repeated misstatements, regarding what the Richard Starr Act actually accomplishes and whom it truly benefits, creating a policy environment that demands congressional clarification and corrective action;

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved,** that the Military Order of the Purple Heart respectfully requests that Congress issue a formal clarification outlining:

1. What the Richard Starr Act does and does not do, particularly regarding the population of Purple Heart recipients;
2. The miscommunications and misrepresentations circulating within portions of the veterans community;
3. A clear differentiation between “medically retired service-members” and “combat wounded / Purple Heart recipients,” ensuring that these terms are never again conflated for legislative or political purposes and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that if Congress intends for the Richard Starr Act to address inequities affecting “combat wounded” service members, then the legislation should be

amended to apply exclusively to those who:

- Were wounded by enemy action,
- Received the Purple Heart Medal and,
- Were medically retired prior to reaching 20 years of service.

This amendment would align the bill’s scope with the terminology its advocates continue to use publicly.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Military Order of the Purple Heart urges Congress to include MOPH as a mandatory stakeholder in any legislative discussions, hearings, advisory panels, or negotiations in which the term and

“combat wounded” is used, referenced, or applied—given that no organization other than MOPH is congressionally chartered to represent, protect, and preserve the honor of the Purple Heart and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that Congress should consider an alternative legislative approach if it intends to support combat-wounded veterans—specifically:

### **Creation of a Purple Heart Stipend**

A federal, non-taxable \$200 per month stipend provided to all living, verified Purple Heart recipients, regardless of retirement status, branch of service, or length of service, and to the primary DIC beneficiaries of those killed in action or deceased due to combat wounds and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that Congress should direct the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to:

1. Reaffirm and publish the formal definition of “combat wounded” as it relates to awarding the Purple Heart;
2. Enforce stricter standards and penalties for individuals, organizations, or entities that misrepresent themselves as combat wounded or seek financial gain from misuse of the term;
3. Consider legislative remedies that hold accountable any group or person who knowingly benefits, financially or politically, from misusing the term “combat wounded,” consistent with the intent of the Stolen Valor Act and,

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Military Order of the Purple Heart firmly asserts that continued misuse of the term “Combat wounded” for legislative promotion is dishonorable, misleading, and disrespectful to those who have shed blood for this nation, and calls on Congress to take decisive action to protect the integrity, honor, and meaning of the Combat Wounded as it relates to the Purple Heart Medal and the men and women who been awarded it.

# 119<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress the PURPLE HEART PROTECTION ACT of 2026

Protecting the recipients of the Purple Heart from fraud, word mark use and stolen valor. Supporting the goals and ideals of establishing a perpetual National Purple Heart Recognition Day on August 7 of each year.

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IN THE HOUSE & SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

\_\_\_\_\_ 2026

Sponsors: \_\_\_\_\_ submitted the following Public Law; which was considered and agreed to

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## PUBLIC LAW

**Ref:- Purple Heart Protection Act of 2026**

Proposed legislative action –

**Seek Public Law** (to be determined)

**\* Request amendment to Public Law 109-437 of the 109th Congress.**

**Action requested of: An Act in the 119<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress**

**To amend Public Law 109-437 and title 18, United States Code, to enhance protections relating to the reputation, word mark and MOPH logo use of the Purple Heart name and meaning of the Purple Heart Medal and Purple Heart protection of its recipients as members of the Congressionally chartered Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A.**

**To establish the sole right to use the word marks/trademarks “Purple Heart” and its likeness of the Purple Heart medal in its logo as established and used since 1932.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, <<NOTE: Stolen Valor Act of 2005.>>

SECTION 1. <<NOTE: 18 USC 1 note.>> SHORT TITLE.

**This amended Act may be cited as the “Purple Heart Protection Act”.**

SEC. 2. <<NOTE: 18 USC 704 note.>> FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

**(1) Fraudulent claims surrounding the receipt of the Purple Heart Medal awarded by the President or the Armed Forces of the United States damage the reputation and meaning of such decorations and medals.**

**(2) A recipient of the Purple Heart reserves the right to use the word mark Purple Heart in all communications befitting an awardee of the Purple Heart Medal.**

(3) Fraudulent claims of receipt of military decorations and medals is punishable under the Stolen Valor Act of 2005.

**(4) Legislative action is necessary to protect the reputation and meaning of the Purple Heart Medal and who has the expressed legal use of the words Purple Heart – the recipients of the Purple Heart Medal and the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A.**

**(5) To formally establish the Purple Heart logo of the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A. chartered by Congress as the official emblem of the Order for its fundraising, legislative and other lawful uses as a non-profit 501 ( c ) 19 War Veterans Service Organization.**

### SEC. 3. ENHANCED PROTECTION OF MEANING OF MILITARY DECORATIONS AND MEDALS.

(a) Expansion of General Criminal Offense.--Subsection (a) of section 704 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking ``manufactures, or sells" and inserting ``purchases, attempts to purchase, solicits for purchase, mails, ships, imports, exports, produces blank certificates of receipt for, manufactures, sells, attempts to sell, advertises for sale, trades, barter, or exchanges for anything of value".

(b) Establishment of Criminal Offense Relating to False Claims About Receipt of Decorations and Medals.--Such section 704 is further amended--

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c);

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

``(b) False Claims About Receipt of Military Decorations or Medals.--Whoever falsely represents himself or herself, verbally or in writing, to have been awarded any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the Armed Forces of the United States, any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration, or medal, or any colorable imitation of such item shall be fined under

this title, imprisoned not more than six months, or both."; and

(3) in paragraph (1) of subsection (c), as redesignated by paragraph (1) of this subsection, by inserting ``or (b)" after ``subsection (a)".

(c) Enhanced Penalty for Offenses Involving Certain Other Medals.--Such section 704 is further amended by adding at the end the following:

``(d) Enhanced Penalty for Offenses Involving Certain Other Medals.--**If a decoration or medal involved in an offense described in**

**subsection (a) a Purple Heart awarded under section 1129 of title 10, or any replacement or duplicate medal for such medal as authorized by law, in lieu of the punishment provided in the applicable subsection, the offender shall be fined under this title.**

(d) Conforming Amendments.--Subsection (c) of such section 704, as so redesignated, is further amended--

(1) by inserting ``Enhanced Penalty for Offenses Involving''

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**Supporting the goals and ideals of a perpetual National Purple Heart Recognition Day on August 7.**

*Resolved*, That the House and Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Purple Heart Recognition Day; and

(2) encourages all people of the United States—

(A) to learn about the history of the Purple Heart Medal;

(B) to honor recipients of the Purple Heart Medal; and

(C) to conduct appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate support for people who have been awarded the Purple Heart Medal.

(D) to protect the Purple Heart recipients from fraud, misuse and loss of reputation due

to stolen valor or other illegal actions that effect the recipients of the Purple Heart and the

Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A.

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# UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PROCLAMATION –

## National Purple Heart Day - August 07, 2026

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August 7, 2026

WHEREAS, our Nation and its principles have been defended throughout history by brave and patriotic men and women who willingly sacrificed their own well-being for the cause of freedom and democracy; and

WHEREAS, President George Washington created the Badge of Military Merit to honor brave military personnel; and

WHEREAS, in 1932, on the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth, the Badge of Military Merit was renamed the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, today the Purple Heart is awarded to honor the Combat Wounded Veterans of this country and those who made the ultimate sacrifice and never returned home; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the seventh day of August as a day to pay National tribute to those who hold the distinction of having been awarded the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, our Combat Veterans have earned profound and eternal gratitude from all of the people of the United States of America for their willingness to risk life and limb for the sake of this nation, its people, and our cherished freedoms.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, \_\_\_\_\_, President of the United States, do hereby proclaim **August 7, 2026, and each successive August 7 and year to be**

### **National Purple Heart Day**

In the United States of America, I urge all people in our Nation to join me in acknowledging and honoring this Nation's 1.8 MILLION Veterans who have been killed or wounded in battle since since our Nation's founding while defending the principles of democracy, individual freedom, and human rights.

Signed this 7<sup>th</sup> day of August 2026

Signed by the President of the United States of America \_\_\_\_\_

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DRAFT Purple Heart Protection Act of 2026 and Purple Heart Day proclamation August 7, 2026 by;

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