



## TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

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### CANDACE WHEELER TAPS Director, Policy



Candace Wheeler joined the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) in 2018 as the Senior Advisor for Policy and Legislation. She is now the TAPS Director for Policy. As a staunch military family advocate with over 30 years' experience, Candace works to protect the rights and earned benefits of surviving families. TAPS is committed to improving support provided by both federal and state governments, and advancing policy and legislation to strengthen the families of the fallen.

During the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, Candace led efforts to finally eliminate the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) – Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset, commonly referred to as the “Widow’s Tax”. The TAPS policy team was instrumental in creating a new strategy, educating Congress, garnering support from veterans and military service organizations, and empowering surviving spouses to advocate on their own behalf. Candace and her team also worked with Members of Congress to help fix the Kiddie Tax issue for surviving military families.

Candace is a leading advocate for the families of those who died as a result of illnesses connected to toxic exposure while serving in the military. She represents TAPS as the co-chair of the Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Coalition and has testified in support of a myriad of toxic exposure bills. TAPS is working to pass comprehensive toxic exposure legislation in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

As the former President of The Military Coalition (TMC) and Chairman of the Board for the National Military Family Association (NMFA), and Spokesperson for the Save Our Benefit Coalition, Candace has championed military families before Congress, State Legislatures, Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). Candace continues to educate and engage key policy-makers on survivor issues, earned military benefits, education for military-connected children, and absentee voting rights. As a military spouse, Candace is committed to strengthening the military and veteran community, their families, caregivers and survivors.

Candace earned a Master’s in Political Management from The George Washington University (GW), and received the 2018 Founding Dean Arterton Award for academic excellence and professional distinction for her advocacy work on behalf of military families and surviving spouses. Candace holds an Executive Certificate in Nonprofit Management from the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University, and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from the University of Southern California (USC).

The ***Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)*** provides comfort, care and resources to all those grieving the death of a military loved one. TAPS also provides programs to survivors nation and worldwide, and is committed to improving support provided by the federal government through the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Education (DoED), Department of Labor (DOL), state governments, and local communities for the families of the fallen – those who fall in combat, those who fall from invisible wounds, and those who die from illness or disease.