



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES**

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November 1, 2025

Timothy Carroll
House Clerk
State House, Room 145
Boston, MA 02133

Michael D. Hurley
Senate Clerk
State House, Room 335
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Clerk Carroll and Clerk Hurley,

Pursuant to Section 18 of Chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws, please find enclosed the annual report from the Women Veterans Network (WVN) within the Executive Office of Veterans Services (EOVS).

Sincerely,

Jon Santiago

CC:

Senator Michael Rodrigues, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Representative Aaron Michlewitz, House Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Senator John Velis, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs
Representative Joe McGonagle, House Chair, Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs

Legislative Mandate

The following report is issued pursuant to Section 18 of Chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws, summarized as follows:

...Annually, not later than November 1, the office shall submit a report to the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, which shall include, but not be limited to: (i) demographic information on women veterans in the commonwealth; (ii) summation of veteran outreach events designed to connect women veterans; (iii) women veteran benefits documents created by the network; and (iv) upcoming in-person events organized or identified by the network.

Contents

Overview of the WVN	3
(i) Massachusetts Women Veteran Demographics	4
(ii) Events and Programming Highlights.....	5
(iii) Tabling and Outreach Highlights	6
(iv) WVN Benefits Documents.....	8
(v) Upcoming In-Person Events.....	9
Addendums.....	10

Overview of the Massachusetts Women Veterans Network

In recognition of the unique needs of women veterans, Congress established the Center for Women Veterans within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1994. This initiative aimed to ensure that female veterans would receive equal benefits and services comparable to their male counterparts. In 1997, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created the Women Veterans Network (WVN) to provide additional support to women veterans through programming, connections to resources, and advocacy. Under the state's Executive Office of Veterans Services, the WVN continues to collaborate with service organizations, veteran advocates, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and other organizations to raise awareness about women veteran issues in Massachusetts.

The mission of WVN is to empower women veterans by ensuring their voices are heard, their contributions acknowledged, and their well-being enhanced through education, advocacy, and collaboration. The vision is to foster an environment that promotes the success and well-being of women veterans in all aspects of their lives, including career development, personal growth, and overall fulfillment. The WVN's values are Advocacy, Support, Progressiveness, Inclusion, Respect, and Equity (ASPIRE).

The WVN offers programming to women veterans that includes an annual Women Veterans Network Conference, Women Veterans Recognition Day Luncheon, the Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony, a financial education and well-being series, family events, and co-sponsored community events such as film screenings and social gatherings. These events allow women veterans to build a sense of camaraderie with fellow women veterans as well as with community service providers.

Additionally, the WVN visits communities across the state to identify women veterans and share resources and support services with veterans and their loved ones. Outreach is not possible without continued partnerships with federal, state, and local government stakeholders, as well as community organizations. These partnerships and direct outreach efforts inform WVN and EOVS and have resulted in improved advocacy for resources and expanded programming.

The Women Veterans Network Collaborative, an evolution of the former Women Veterans Network Steering Committee, continued to meet quarterly, with special meetings for those assisting in planning WVN's major events. Membership increased from 15 in 2024 to 25 in 2025 and is diverse across race/ethnicity, age, military branch, and conflict era. In addition to providing advocacy and guidance, members volunteered at the annual Women Veterans Network Conference, the Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon, and the Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony.

Massachusetts Women Veteran Demographics

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that 22,870 female veterans reside in Massachusetts, representing approximately 8% of the state's total veteran population. Women veterans are overwhelmingly white, comprising 81% of the female veteran population. The three counties with the highest concentrations of women veterans are Middlesex, Worcester, and Hampden, respectively. ¹

Total Massachusetts Veterans: 273,934

Female Veterans: 22,870

<i>Massachusetts Female Veterans by Age</i>														
20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	Grand Total
272	1,063	1,700	1,924	2,194	2,076	2,123	2,396	3,165	2,470	1,494	727	395	862	22,870

<i>Massachusetts Women Veterans by Race/Ethnicity</i>									
White, alone	Black or African American, alone	American Indian and Alaska Native, alone	Asian, alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, alone	Some other race, alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	White alone, Not Hispanic or Latino	All Veterans
18,658	1,832	71	401	0	547	1,361	2,194	17,732	22,870

<i>Massachusetts Female Veterans by County</i>	
County	As of 9/30/25
Barnstable, MA	1,270
Berkshire, MA	457
Bristol, MA	2,171
Dukes, MA	46
Essex, MA	1,928
Franklin, MA	408
Hampden, MA	2,515
Hampshire, MA	741
Middlesex, MA	4,211
Nantucket, MA	21
Norfolk, MA	1,980
Plymouth, MA	1,958
Suffolk, MA	1,708
Worcester, MA	3,255
	22,669

¹ U.S. Veterans Administration. (n.d.). *National center for veteran analysis: Veteran population*, from https://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran_population.asp

Events and Programming Highlights

Since October 2024, the Women Veterans Network (WVN) has hosted nine events, with some cancellations prompting the launch of a Program Interest Survey to better understand women veterans' social and educational needs. The survey, conducted from July to August 2025, measured location, availability, and program interests. Results from the survey informed more strategic event planning for FY26.

Executive Office of Veterans Services Massachusetts Women Veterans Network Events and Programming	
March 2025	
March 20, 2025	City of Boston Women Veterans Roundtable
March 22, 2025	Mind, Body, Service Wellness Workshop
April 2025	
April 19, 2025	United in Service. Stronger Together! EOVS Family Open House with the YMCA (Charlestown, Massachusetts and online)
May 2025	
May 17, 2025	17 th Annual Women Veterans Network Conference (Southbridge, Massachusetts)
June 2025	
June 13, 2025	Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony (Boston, Massachusetts)
June 17, 2025	Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon (Worcester, Massachusetts)
June 26, 2025	WealthTrek Learning Center Family Open House (Burlington, Massachusetts)
October 2025	
October 15, 2025	Strength in Clay, Part 1 (Fitchburg, MA)
October 29, 2025	Strength in Clay, Part 2 (Fitchburg, MA)

Each year, the WVN hosts its flagship event, the Annual Women Veterans Network Conference. The 17th annual conference was held on May 17, 2025, in Southbridge, Massachusetts. The theme, “Legacy of Service,” reflected the continued acts of service by women after leaving the military. There were over 150 attendees (guests, speakers, presenters, and vendors) as well as more than 25 volunteers. Over 45 exhibitors provided information about services and benefits available to women veterans. This year’s speaking program included Secretary Jon Santiago; Keith Roberts, District Veterans Services Director of Southbridge; Lourdes Tiglaio, former Executive Director of the VA Center for Women Veterans; and a keynote delivered by Elizabeth Estabrooks, U.S. Army Veteran and speaker.

The conference also featured 11 breakout sessions as follows:

- Session 1: *Creating Calmness in Stressful Times* with the American Red Cross
- Session 2: *The Power of Listening: Elevating Women Veteran Voices in Massachusetts* with Deputy Secretary Andrea Gayle-Bennett and the Women Veterans Advisory Council
- Session 3: *Back to Basics* with Sarah Rondinone, MS, RDN, CDN
- Session 4: *Women Veterans Benefits Panel* with Lynnett Gabrilla, Deputy Chief Engagement Officer of Peer Support & Outreach and Anna Richardson, Co-Executive Director & Chief Counsel of Veterans Legal Services
- Session 5: Chair Massage and Reiki Healing Sessions
- Session 6: *Executive Function Skills in Busy, Hard-Working Women* with Taryn Barlow, M.S., CCC-SLP, CBIS, The Well Brain
- Session 7: *Journaling as a Means to Destress* with Mary-dith Tuitt
- Session 8: *Advocacy 101* with Guest Lecturer Maureen Elias

Session 9: *Financial Wellness Q&A* with Sue Katz, Hanscom Federal Credit Union
Session 10: *Resume Building and Interview Skills* for Women Veterans with 22Mohawks
Session 11: *Working through Compulsive Collecting and Clutter* with Mike Nowicki, LICSW, Community Healthlink

The WVN also hosted a Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon on June 17, 2025. This event attracted over 80 women veterans and guests. The keynote address was delivered by Lt. Col. Robin “Phoenix” Johnson, U.S. Army (Retired).

Lastly, the WVN hosted the 20th Annual Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony on June 12, 2025. This year, 13 women veterans were nominated. The 2025 recipient of the Deborah Sampson Award was Ashley Booker, a Navy veteran and employee of Suffolk University’s Veterans Upward Bound program. The ceremony featured remarks from Governor Maura Healey, Executive Office of Veterans Services Deputy Secretary Andrea Gayle-Bennett, and Mary-dith Tuitt, the 2024 Deborah Sampson Award recipient.

Tabling and Outreach Highlights

The WVN also performed outreach (tabling) at 46 events. During tabling, the WVN provides women veterans with information about programs and services through direct engagement, conversations, and brochures. These events allowed the WVN to connect with a record number of women veterans. The WVN also participates in several statewide collaboratives that share information and advocate for veteran issues.

A total of 210 new WVN Newsletter subscribers were added in FY25, representing a 6.86% increase from FY24. The newsletter achieved an average open rate of 54% and a 4% click rate. Overall membership in the WVN grew to 3,297, reflecting an increase from 3,154 in the previous year. Additionally, a resource document was developed to support LGBTQ+ veterans and their loved ones.

As part of its broader collaborative efforts, the WVN contributes to the work of the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (WVAC). The Committee advises the Executive Office of Veterans Services on issues affecting women veterans, focusing on improving access to benefits, health care, housing, and employment opportunities. In FY25, WVAC published its first annual report highlighting key priorities, including addressing barriers to care, increasing visibility of women veterans, and enhancing statewide coordination among veteran-serving organizations. Through active participation with WVAC, the WVN ensures that insights gained through its outreach and engagement efforts inform policy recommendations, strengthen advocacy, and advance equity for women veterans across the Commonwealth.

Executive Office of Veterans Services Massachusetts Women Veterans Network Tabling and Outreach	
November 2024	
November 6, 2024	Abington Veterans Resource Fair (Abington, Massachusetts)
November 11, 2024	EOVS Veterans Day Celebration (Boston, Massachusetts)
November 12, 2024	Veterans Day Luncheon at MCC (Lowell, Massachusetts)
November 19, 2024	Boots2Suits (Cambridge, Massachusetts)
December 2025	
December 7, 2024	Community Baby Shower for Women (Worcester, Massachusetts)
January 2025	
January 22, 2025	PWHL/Boston Fleet vs. Toronto Sceptres (Lowell, Massachusetts)
January 29, 2025	Veterans Inc. RI Resource Fair (Swansea, Massachusetts)
February 2025	
February 22, 2025	Thunderbirds Military Recognition Night (Springfield, Massachusetts)
February 23, 2025	Six Triple Eight Movie Screening with Panel (Boston, Massachusetts)
February 26, 2025	Women Veterans Meet Up and Town Hall Forum (Boston, Massachusetts)
March 2025	
March 1, 2025	Sheroes Celebration Luncheon (Swansea, Massachusetts)
March 8, 2025	Cape & Islands Veterans Outreach Event (Hyannis, Massachusetts)
March 11 – 12, 2025	Veterans Experience Action Center (Foxborough, Massachusetts)
April 2025	
April 3, 2025	Women Veterans Open House with Info Session (Brockton, Massachusetts)
April 4, 2025	Parkinsons Awareness Seminar (Brockton, Massachusetts)
April 5, 2025	Veterans Community Expo (Medford, Massachusetts)
April 10, 2025	Veterans Outreach Event with Innovets (Boston, Massachusetts)
April 24, 2025	Veterans Resource Fair (Barnstable, Massachusetts)
April 25, 2025	Weymouth Veterans Services Coffee Social (Weymouth, Massachusetts)
April 26, 2025	Westport Veterans Resource Fair (Westport, Massachusetts)
April 30, 2025	Mother's Day Card Making Workshop (South Yarmouth, Massachusetts)
June 2025	
June 10, 2025	Lowell CBOC Open House (Lowell, Massachusetts)
June 13, 2025	Veterans, Inc. Stand Down (Worcester, Massachusetts)
June 14, 2025	DoD Volunteers Event (Wellesley, Massachusetts)
June 19, 2025	Stoughton Juneteenth Celebration (Stoughton, Massachusetts)
June 21, 2025	VABC SHEROES Ice Cream Social (Fall River, Massachusetts)
July 2025	
July 23, 2025	Framingham CBOC Veterans Open House & Town Hall (Framingham, Massachusetts)
July 26, 2025	2025 Run to Home Base (Boston, Massachusetts)
August 2025	
August 9, 2025	Veterans Picnic in the Park (West Springfield, Massachusetts)
August 16, 2025	Veterans Day at Marshfield Fair (Marshfield, Massachusetts)
August 30, 2025	Veterans' Resource Fair & Expo (Roxbury, Massachusetts)
September 2025	
September 12, 2025	Military Appreciation Day at the Big E (Springfield, Massachusetts)
September 14, 2025	Honoring our Heroes (Royalston, Massachusetts)
September 17, 2025	State Grants Expos with Senator Finegold (North Andover, Massachusetts)
September 19, 2025	Greater Boston Stand Down (Boston, Massachusetts)
September 20, 2025	4 th Annual Health & Wellness Event (Somerville, Massachusetts)
September 24, 2025	Port City Heroes Helping Heroes (Newburyport, Massachusetts)
September 27, 2025	Boston North Health & Wellness Expo (Danvers, Massachusetts)
October 2025	
October 4, 2025	FraminghamFEST (Framingham, Massachusetts)
October 13, 2025	Indigenous Peoples Day Newton (Newton, Massachusetts)
October 17, 2025	CIVOC Stand Down Cape Cod (Hyannis, Massachusetts)
October 18, 2025	Foxborough Veterans Department Resource Fair (Foxborough, Massachusetts)
October 20–22, 2025	Annual Veterans Service Officer Training (Leominster, Massachusetts)
October 24, 2025	Billerica Veterans Services Resource Fair (Billerica, Massachusetts)
October 25, 2025	3 rd Annual Women Veterans Conference New Hampshire (Rindge, New Hampshire)
October 29, 2025	Lowell Vet Center Trunk or Treat (Lowell, Massachusetts)

Women Veterans Benefits Documents

The WVN continues to engage women veterans throughout the Commonwealth. Multiple WVN documents have been created to outline benefits, increase knowledge of services, and offer opportunities to join the WVN network. Below is a summary of the documents developed by the WVN, with corresponding examples included in the addendums.

The WVN produces a monthly electronic newsletter of upcoming events and resources that is emailed to all WVN members. Archives of past newsletters can be found on the WVN website (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-women-veterans-network>).

The WVN produced a brochure that shares the mission, vision, and history of the WVN, as well as information about how to join the network. The brochure provides contact information such as a phone number, email, QR code, and website (Addendum A).

The WVN offers an online application to join the network. This application is open to all women veterans and allies and is accessible on the WVN website (Addendum B).

The WVN offers an online application to join the Women Veterans Network Collaborative. This collaborative is an advisory council of women veterans that provides guidance and leadership for the WVN. The application is available online for women veterans interested in serving a one-year term (Addendum C). A renewal application is also available for those who decide to return the following year (Addendum D).

The WVN also manages the Deborah Sampson Award application. This application supports the annual Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony, an event honoring an exemplary woman veteran, held each June. The application is accessible online through the WVN website (Addendum E).

The Massachusetts Women Veterans Network website is rich with information for women veterans, state and federal agencies, community partners, and other stakeholders. In February 2024, the WVN website was redesigned to include a robust resources section and to improve the display of upcoming events, updates, and WVN newsletter archives.

Women Veterans Network website:

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-women-veterans-network>

Upcoming In-person Events

March 2026: *Annual Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon*

This event provides a heartwarming tribute to the brave women of Massachusetts who have served, and includes a keynote speaker and opening ceremony.

May 2026: *WVN Annual Conference*

The annual conference provides women veterans with an opportunity to meet, network, and learn about updates from the Executive Office of Veterans Services. A typical conference includes an opening ceremony, afternoon guest speakers, multiple breakout sessions, and opportunities for women veterans to build community. The conference often hosts numerous exhibitors from the veteran community, including the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, various state programs, nonprofit organizations, and veteran community groups. It is staffed by EOVS employees, supported by a contingent of volunteers, and accessible to all women veterans with a virtual option.

June 2026: *Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony*

Hosted in Memorial Hall at the Massachusetts State House, this annual award ceremony pays homage to those who exemplify the spirit of Deborah Sampson. Named after the Revolutionary War hero who disguised herself as a man to fight for her country, the ceremony celebrates individuals who embody her indomitable spirit, resilience, and dedication to service. The recipient of this esteemed award is recognized for extraordinary contributions and selfless acts of service. From military heroes to community champions, these individuals inspire others with their unwavering commitment to making a difference. The ceremony includes the presentation of the Deborah Sampson Award, captivating stories of bravery and sacrifice, and the commemoration of one of America's first female soldiers.

Addendum A – Women Veterans Network Brochure



Our History

In recognition of the unique needs of women veterans, Congress established the Center for Women Veterans within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1994. This initiative aimed to ensure that female veterans would receive equal benefits and services comparable to their male counterparts.

In 1997, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created Women Veterans Network (WVN) to provide additional support to women veterans through programming, connections to resources, and advocacy. Under the state's Executive Office of Veteran Services, the WVN continues to collaborate with service organizations, veterans' advocates, the VA and other organizations to raise awareness about women veterans' issues in Massachusetts.



Contact Us

+1 (617) 210-5480

EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov

mass.gov/womenveterans

@MAWomenVets

Ready to Join? Scan Our QR Code!



WOMEN VETERANS NETWORK



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
EXECUTIVE OFFICE of VETERANS SERVICES



Our Mission

The Women's Veterans Network's (WVN) mission is to empower women veterans by ensuring their voices are heard, their contributions acknowledged, and their well-being enhanced through education, advocacy, and collaboration.

Why Join?

- Receive the WVN monthly newsletter
- Network with other female veterans, including the annual WVN Conference
- Make connections to resources in your community
- Programs such as career coaching, wellbeing, family outings, financial education and more!



Our Vision

To foster an environment that promotes the success and well-being of women veterans in all aspects of their lives, including career development, personal growth, and overall fulfillment.

Addendum B – Women Veterans Network Application

Be counted as a woman veteran in the Commonwealth! Join a network of fellow women veterans & learn about the things you're interested in like benefits, resources, upcoming events, & more!



Please provide us with some general information so we can best serve you.

Name*

First Name	Initial (optional)	Last Name

Date of Birth*

Email*

Phone*

City/Town*

County

Mailing Address*

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City	State	ZIP Code

Were/are you a member of the U.S. Armed Forces?*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Which branch did you serve with?

- ☐ Army
☐ Air Force
☐ Coast Guard
☐ Navy
☐ Marine Corps
☐ National Guard/Reserve Component
☐ Space Force

What are you interested in? Select all that apply.

- ☐ VA Women Health Clinics
☐ VA Benefits
☐ Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Support
☐ WVN Monthly Newsletters
☐ Meeting fellow Women Veterans
☐ Upcoming WVN Events
☐ Learning about the Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
☐ Employment & Career Readiness
☐ MASSVETS Financial Benefits
☐ Housing Resources
☐ Legal Resources
☐ Education Benefits/Tuition Waivers
☐ Food Resources
☐ Other

[Submit Form](#)

Addendum C – Women Veterans Network Collaborative Application



2025 Women Veterans Network Collaborative Membership Application

Submit

Name

First Name

Last Name

Preferred Pronouns

Email

example@example.com

Phone Number

Please enter a valid phone number.

Address

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City

State / Province

1

Postal / Zip Code

Employment and Military Service**Current Employer****Job Title****Veteran**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Retiree

☐ Yes

☐ No

Branch of Service (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Air Force
- ☐ Army
- ☐ Coast Guard
- ☐ Navy
- ☐ Marine Corps
- ☐ National Guard
- ☐ Reserves
- ☐ Space Force

Component (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Active
- ☐ Reserves
- ☐ National Guard

Dates of Service

Memberships of other Veterans Organizations

Additional Information (Optional)



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SECRETARY, EOVS

ANDREA GAYLE-BENNETT,
DMSc, PA-C
DEPUTY SECRETARY, EOVS

Addendum D – Women Veterans Network Collaborative Renewal Application



2025 Women Veterans Network Collaborative Membership Renewal Application

Submit

Name

First Name

Last Name

Preferred Pronouns



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ANDREA GAYLE-BENNETT,
DMSc, PA-C
DEPUTY SECRETARY, EOVS

Email

example@example.com

Phone Number

Please enter a valid phone number.

Address

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

----------------------	----------------------

City

State / Province

Postal / Zip Code



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DEPUTY SECRETARY, EOVS

Employment and Military Service

Current Employer

Job Title

Any Veterans Organizations Membership Changes?

Additional Information (Optional)



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Addendum E – The Deborah Sampson Award Nomination Application

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Executive Office of Veterans Services

Deborah Sampson Award

OFFERED BY

Executive Office of Veterans Services

2025 Deborah Sampson Award Nomination

The Deborah Sampson Award proudly recognizes a Female Veteran who has gone above and beyond to serve her fellow Women Veterans throughout the year. The Deborah Sampson Award is presented to the recipient at the annual Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony.

Deborah Sampson Award Nomination

Nominations are now CLOSED.

Submitter's Name*

First Name Last Name

Submitter's Address*

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City State ZIP Code

Submitter's Telephone*

Submitter's Email Address*

CONTACT

Massachusetts Women Veterans Network (WVN)

Online

Get in contact with the WVN

EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov

Join the Network!

Women Veterans Network Application

Women Veterans Network Collaborative Application

Nominee Information

The nominee must be a woman who resides in Massachusetts. The nominee must have served on active duty for the U.S. Military, Reserves, or National Guard. It is essential to include answers to the following:

1. Provide an overview of the nominee's military service, awards, and pioneering efforts for women in the military.
2. Describe any personal sacrifices or hardships the nominee endured in order to serve in the military.
3. Please specify the nominee's accomplishments toward enhancing female veterans' through community service and participation in veterans' organizations.
4. Why does this nominee merit special recognition as an Outstanding Woman Veteran? Please be specific.

Nominee's Name*

First Name Last Name

Nominee's Email Address*

Nominee's Phone Number*

Nominee's Address*

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City State ZIP Code

Please provide a written explanation of why you nominated this person*

File Upload - Optional 1 of 3

Drag and drop here or [Browse files](#)
Max file size: 100 MB

If you would like to submit letters of support for this nomination please attach here

File Upload - Optional 2 of 3

Drag and drop here or [Browse files](#)
Max file size: 100 MB

File Upload - Optional 3 of 3

Drag and drop here or [Browse files](#)
Max file size: 100 MB

Submit form