

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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PRESS RELEASE

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First Hearings on COVID-19 Outbreak at Holyoke Soldiers' Home to be Held This Week

HOLYOKE-Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer) will take part in the first hearings for the Special Joint Oversight Committee on the Holyoke Soldiers' Home COVID-19 outbreak this week on Tuesday, October 20th at 11 A.M and Thursday, October 22nd at 12 P.M. The Tuesday hearing will be held at Holyoke Community College, and the second will be conducted virtually. Since the outbreak began in mid-March, at least 76 veterans in the 247-bed home have died from COVID-19, while another 80 veterans and 84 employees contracted the virus.

Senator Gobi is the former Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs and currently serves as Vice Chair on the Joint Committee on Public Service. She had this to say on the hearings this week, "I am committed to doing all I can to make sure that our Veterans receive the care they deserve and that the deaths of our heroes was not in vain. I thank the families for their willingness to share their loved one's stories and for their desire to see positive change."

Family members are encouraged to testify either in person, remotely, or by written testimony, and this will be their first opportunity to do so in a public forum. First priority will be accorded to family members of both our heroic Veterans that have succumbed to COVID-19 and to those of our surviving residents at the Holyoke Soldiers Home. Unfortunately, given COVID protocols and procedures, hearings may be extended where we are soliciting testimony from family members beyond this date. Regardless, we will make every accommodation possible to provide the opportunity for all family members and healthcare proxies to testify.

For individuals looking to testify at the hearings, please email Jessica Avery at jessica.avery@mahouse.gov. Please make sure to include Special Joint Oversight Committee on the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke COVID-19 Outbreak Testimony Sign Up in the subject line. We also ask that you provide us with your name, organization, phone number, and email that you

will use to sign into the hearing. We will follow up with you about how to share testimony with the committee.

You are also invited to send your testimony either as an attached PDF or in the body of an email to Jessica Avery, Research Director, at jessica.avery@mahouse.gov or Hannah Buntich, Chair Timilty's Chief of Staff, at hannah.buntich@masenate.gov no later than 7:00 pm on October 22, 2020. Please make sure to include the Special Joint Oversight Committee on the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke COVID-19 Outbreak Testimony in the subject line. We also ask you provide the committee with your name, address, organization (if applicable), and phone number.

For more information, please contact our office at (617) 722-1540.

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