

**THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA
102nd ANNUAL DEPARTMENT CONVENTION
THE HILTON, HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
JULY 15 – 18, 2021**

Resolution No. 102-2

Submitted by: William Whitmoyer
Legislative Committee Chairman

WHEREAS, Every June is designated as “National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Month” to help raise public awareness, reduce the associated stigma, and help ensure that those individuals suffering from the invisible wounds of war promptly receive proper treatment; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports that approximately 20% Iraqi Freedom, 12% Persian Gulf and 30% Vietnam War service members and Veterans have post- traumatic stress; and

WHEREAS, Making sure Veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) receive proper care is a priority of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, Both government and non-government organizations have made significant advances in their identification, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress; and

WHEREAS, Our organization understands that there is no one-size-fits-all treatment for this condition; and

WHEREAS, One of the most promising PTSD treatments is Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) and the VA Long Beach Healthcare System, in California, and the Veterans Affairs Center for Compassionate Care Innovation are leading an effort to offer SGB to a subset of Veterans who have not experienced relief from traditional PTSD treatments; and

WHEREAS, The SGB procedure has been used successfully for over 10 years to treat post-traumatic stress symptoms in thousands of US military service members, civilians, and Veterans in select hospitals in Europe and North America; and

WHEREAS, A study by Dr. Sean W. Mulvaney, a staff physician with Regenerative Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in Annapolis, MD, who has had great success using SGB to treat individuals suffering from PTSD, and others, on the procedure’s successful use with PTSD was published in *JAMA Psychiatry* in 2019, the first multi-sight randomized controlled trial of SGB for treatment of PTSD, found that the SGB procedure decreases the severity of PTSD symptoms; and

- WHEREAS, SGB has been shown to reduce PTSD symptoms without prolonged use of medications or cognitive therapy¹; and
- WHEREAS, There is growing evidence that SGB may alleviate certain PTSD symptoms such as hyperarousal, exaggerated startle responses and anxiety, and it appears to calm an exaggerated “fight or flight” survival reflex in people having PTSD, which can become triggered by various events that do not warrant it; and
- WHEREAS, Veterans who received SGB for other health conditions like nerve pain, report positive effects for the PTSD symptoms including reduced anxiety and hypervigilance; and
- WHEREAS, More research is currently being conducted to see if SGB affects other conditions such as anxiety, suicidal thoughts, pain, and alcohol use; and
- WHEREAS, The relatively quick and painless nature of SGB could potentially reduce the high dropout rates associated with forms of talk therapy, and because SGB does not require individuals to open up and talk about painful memories, it could also reduce some of the stigma surrounding mental health treatment; and
- WHEREAS, It is important that Veterans have the ability to choose their treatment; and
- WHEREAS, It is important that Veterans have timely access to their treatment within a practical distance from their homes; and
- WHEREAS, The VA only provides SGB treatments for PTSD at a limited number of locations throughout the VA Health System; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania Veterans currently must travel out of state to receive this relatively simple treatment, if they are aware of it and have been allowed to try it; and
- WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee of The American Legion, in regular meeting assembled virtually on October 14-15, 2020, did approve Resolution No. 10: Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) Research For Treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); and
- WHEREAS, The American Legion supports legislation through Resolution No. 10: Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) Research for Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), where we have Resolved to urge the federal government to accelerate stellate ganglion block (SGB) research and that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) advertise SGB in all VA health-care facilities; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania in Convention assembled at the Harrisburg Hilton Hotel, Harrisburg, PA, July 15-18, does affirm its support for any legislation that expands Veterans’ accessibility to a wide array of state-of-the-art treatments and evidence-based therapies with**

¹ Rae Olmsted KL, Bartoszek M, Mulvaney S, et al. Effect of Stellate Ganglion Block Treatment on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2020;77(2):130–138. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2019.3474

further research, innovation and access, to include Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) treatment for PTSD; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania urges the federal government to accelerate Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) research; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania urges the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to advertise SGB in all VA health-care facilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania urges our Pennsylvania federal Senators and Representatives, all members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to do everything within their power to ensure all VA Medical Hospitals within Pennsylvania provide Veterans a wide array of state-of-the-art treatments and evidence-based therapies with further research, innovation and access, to include Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) for treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the two Pennsylvania Senators in the United States Senate and to the 18 Pennsylvania Representatives in the United States House of Representatives for their immediate action; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the members of both Chambers of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for their immediate action; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf.

APPROVED_ _____ REJECTED_____ REFERRED_____ CONSOLIDATED_____ FILED_____