



PRESS RELEASE

Rep. Dean Phillips Honored for Commitment to Surviving Military Families *TAPS Presents Congressman with the Annual Senator Ted Stevens Leadership Award*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—March 21, 2023

ARLINGTON, Va. — The **Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)** will proudly present U.S. Rep. Dean Phillips (MN-3) with the Senator Ted Stevens Leadership Award at its annual TAPS Honor Guard Gala on March 22, 2023, at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.

At 6 months old, Rep. Phillips became a Gold Star Child when his father, Army Capt. Arthur Thomas “Artie” Pfefer, died in Vietnam on July 25, 1969. He personally understands the sacrifices made by our nation’s surviving military families, and, since taking office, he has tirelessly advocated for the families of our nation’s fallen heroes.

“Representative Phillips honors his father and carries his legacy forward by being a voice on Capitol Hill for all those who have experienced the loss of someone whose life included selfless service to our nation,” said Bonnie Carroll, TAPS President and Founder. “His empathy and commitment to the military survivor community ensure the families of America’s fallen heroes are never forgotten.”

Rep. Phillips’ own loss became the compassion and persistence behind his support of surviving military families on Capitol Hill. He is the sponsor of TAPS’ top legislative priority, The Love Lives On Act. This essential legislation will ensure that surviving spouses — like his own mother — who choose to remarry, are able to retain critical benefits at any age.

Rep. Phillips has previously supported surviving families by ensuring remarried surviving spouses have access to electronic medical records for minor dependent children; changing the way casualty assistance handles cases where there is no surviving parent; ending the Survivor Benefit Plan and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Offset; eliminating the Kiddie Tax; and fighting for passage of the PACT Act.

“I’m honored to receive the Ted Stevens Leadership Award and extend my heartfelt thanks to TAPS and the families that they represent. Supporting the families of Americans who die serving their country is one of our most sacred responsibilities, and one that I consider central to my duties as a public servant and Gold Star Son. We can never replace the loved ones we lose in service, but we can honor their sacrifice. Supporting surviving family members is one of the most important ways to do so.”

ABOUT THE SENATOR TED STEVENS LEADERSHIP AWARD

Sen. Ted Stevens left behind a legacy of caring for the families of the fallen. Following the Army National Guard plane crash in 1992 that took the life of his friend, Army Brig. Gen. Tom Carroll, Stevens helped his widow, Bonnie Carroll, found TAPS as the national non-profit organization caring for all those grieving the loss of a military loved one. TAPS continues to honor him through this leadership award in his name.

TAPS HONOR GUARD GALA

Funds raised at the annual **Honor Guard Gala** allow TAPS to provide critical, 24/7 support to the families of fallen U.S. military personnel and veterans at no cost to surviving family members. The Title Sponsor of this year’s gala is **USAA**. Presenting Sponsors include: **Battelle, Oshkosh Defense, Pratt & Whitney, and Prudential**. Patriot Sponsors include: **Arthur M. Blank Foundation, BAE, Health Net Federal Services, Lockheed Martin, the Krivo Family, and TriWest**.

The gala begins with a reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by a dinner and program at 7:00 p.m. Sponsorship information is available at taps.org/gala.

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ABOUT TAPS

TAPS is the leading national organization providing compassionate care and survivor support services for the families of America’s fallen military heroes. Since 1994, TAPS has offered support to all those grieving the death of a military loved one through peer-based emotional support, connections with grief and trauma resources, grief seminars and retreats for adults, Good Grief Camps for children, casework assistance, connections to community-based care, online and in-person support groups, and the 24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline, all at no cost to surviving families. For more information, please visit TAPS.org or call 202-588-TAPS (8277).

