



Allegheny County Council

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Title: Proclamation thanking U.S. Army Veteran, Eli Smith, for his dedication and commitment to raising awareness for PTSD and veteran suicide.
Sponsors: Sam DeMarco
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Proclamation thanking U.S. Army Veteran, *Eli Smith*, for his dedication and commitment to raising awareness for PTSD and veteran suicide.

WHEREAS, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health problem that some individuals develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault. PTSD can develop at any age and various factors can increase the chance that someone will have PTSD, many of which are not under that person's control; and

WHEREAS, research has shown a strong link between level of combat stress and PTSD because often during war, military service members are exposed to a number of potentially traumatic events; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs estimates that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) afflicts: 11-20% who served in Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF), 12% who served in Gulf War, and 30% of Vietnam Veterans; and

WHEREAS, in November 2016, U.S. Army veteran from Ohio, *Eli Smith* took off on a 15,000-mile, 3-year journey across American to raise awareness for PTSD and veteran suicide. When *Eli* began his journey, an average of 22 veterans died each day from suicide according to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Devastated by that alarming number, *Eli* felt compelled to help his fellow veterans; and

WHEREAS, *Eli* sold all his possessions and set out to travel by foot across the United States, stopping in as many major cities as he could along the way to raise awareness about PTSD and veteran suicide. After walking 4,600 miles through 10 states, *Eli* switched over to a bicycle. Instead of keeping the original plan of walking the entire time, he added 3,400 miles to his route, so he could reach more cities and veterans; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, *Eli* pedaled 7,000 miles through 18 states, and in 2019 he plans to pedal 4,800 more miles through another 18 states. Throughout his entire journey, *Eli* has been able to spread PTSD and veteran suicide awareness, and he has gained traction from newspapers, magazines, television and radio shows, podcasts, and on social media;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Allegheny County Council Member Sam DeMarco, do hereby recognize and thank U.S. Army Veteran, *Eli Smith*, for his dedication and commitment to raising awareness to PTSD and veteran suicide.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto caused the Seal of the County of Allegheny to be affixed this 4th day of April 2019.