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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR MURRAY TO LAUNCH 4TH ANNUAL VETERANS TOUR ON INDEPENDENCE DAY**Lieutenant Governor Murray scheduled to participate in July 4th Watch Festivities aboard the USS WASP; 9 day Veterans Tour will continue in local communities across Massachusetts**

BOSTON – Monday, July 2, 2012 – Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray will launch the Patrick-Murray Administration's 4th Annual Massachusetts Awareness for Support and Services (MASS) Veterans Tour on Independence Day. Lieutenant Governor Murray will join U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus for festivities aboard the USS WASP currently docked in the Boston Harbor. After the Fourth of July and War of 1812 Bicentennial commemoration events, Lieutenant Governor Murray will continue the 9 day tour in local communities across Massachusetts. (*Full tour schedule follows.*)

"Massachusetts is proud to support newly returning Veterans as well as Veterans of all eras, and I am especially honored to lead our annual Veterans tour to promote resources available to our servicemen and women," said Lieutenant Governor Murray, Chair of the Governor's Advisory Council for Veterans' Services. "As we continue to expand the range of services in Massachusetts, we need to take the extra step to raise awareness and ensure our Veterans and their families gain access to the resources and benefits they have rightfully earned. This upcoming tour will highlight these resources, and we remain committed to increasing awareness for Veterans' services throughout the year."

Building on the success of three previous tours, the 4th Annual MASS Veterans Tour will promote services offered by the state as well as local and federal government and private and non-profit organizations for Veterans and their families. Among the range of services to highlight, Lieutenant Governor Murray will especially promote new initiatives launched within the last year including the work of the Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force to protect the jobs and mission at the Commonwealth's six military bases. As part of the comprehensive plans to increase employment opportunities for Veterans announced last November, Lieutenant Governor Murray will join the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce on July 12 for an announcement supporting the hiring Veterans in Massachusetts. During the tour, Lieutenant Governor Murray will also join the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to highlight a partnership which has successfully provided increased housing assistance to help end homelessness for Veterans and transition Veterans back to the workforce.

"I am proud to join Lt. Governor Murray on the 4th Annual MASS Veterans tour," said Department of Veterans' Services Secretary Coleman Nee. "Massachusetts provides the most comprehensive and innovative benefits and services for veterans and their families. The continued support of the Patrick-Murray administration ensures the Commonwealth will remain a national leader and this tour brings attention to the issues facing our returning veterans while highlighting the extensive programs and services available to assist our veterans and their families."

Most recently, Governor Deval Patrick signed enabling legislation known as the VALOR Act (Veterans' Access, Livelihood, Opportunity and Resources) on May 31. Among other provisions, the VALOR Act provides greater access to financial assistance for small businesses; affords greater opportunities for service-disabled Veterans to participate in public projects; makes it easier for children of military personnel to transfer between school districts and states; and expands supports from the Massachusetts Military Family Relief Fund to Gold Star Families.

The Department of Veterans' Services and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative recently launched a new web portal, www.MassVetsAdvisor.org, providing Veterans and military families with a one-stop shop and improved access to services such as employment, education, and medical services. During the tour, Lieutenant Governor Murray will lead two roundtable discussions with Veterans and military families in Newton and Chicopee for the Department of Veterans' Services to demonstrate the benefits of the new web portal.

As the Chairman of the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services, Lieutenant Governor Murray has led a group of

Veterans and advocates for the last five years to promote and improve the Administration's outreach and service delivery to Veterans and their families.

Staff from the Department of Veterans' Services or Lieutenant Governor Murray's Office will be available at each event during the tour to answer questions about Veterans' programs and benefits in the Commonwealth.

[Watch a two minute video recapping the 2009 Inaugural Tour.](#)

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