



The Senate of Texas

CÉSAR J. BLANCO

TEXAS SENATOR
DISTRICT 29

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El Paso Supports Elizabeth Dole Foundation I Am A Caregiver Initiative to Grow Military Caregiver Networks

Effort builds upon the work the City and El Paso County are doing to support military members, veterans, and caregivers

El Paso, TX – The City of El Paso, Texas and El Paso County join the Elizabeth Dole Foundation as the organization launches the I Am a Caregiver campaign at the 4th Annual Veterans and Family Caregiver Expo on Thursday, March 14. This initiative aims to shine a light on military and veteran caregivers in the local community by encouraging individuals, some of whom might not know they are a caregiver, to self-identify and stand up to be recognized as a part of the I Am A Caregiver initiative.

"Today, El Paso is setting an example for cities across America. They are showing our country what it means to truly support military caregivers, their families, and the service members and veterans they care for," said Steve Schwab, CEO of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation.

In 2021, the City and El Paso County signed proclamations to become members of the Foundation's Hidden Heroes Cities and Counties program. Joining over 200 communities, they pledged a commitment to honor caregivers in their crucial role to their veterans' health and share best practices among the caregiver community. Since then, El Paso has hosted 11 Hidden Heroes events. They have prioritized caregiver issues including mental health, peer support, and healthcare provider education. The integration of Hidden Heroes into the City of El Paso's Office of Military and Veteran Affairs helped distinguish the city as a Great American Defense Community by the Association of Defense Communities in 2023.

On November 1, 2022, El Paso County declared itself, "Veterans Capital of the U.S.A."—where every day is Veteran's Day. El Paso veterans are a dynamic part of the region as they continue to lead the way through volunteering, voting, community engagement, and are always there to lend a helping hand. Spearheaded by County Judge Ricardo Samaniego, El Paso County will continue to champion and support veterans and their families by collaborating with community organizations to provide accessible and high-quality healthcare, education, employment, and quality of life.

"As the Veterans Capital, we work tirelessly to bring awareness to our veterans," said El Paso County Judge Ricardo Samaniego. "Their caregivers, aka Hidden Heroes, are an important and

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integral component of their veterans' everyday lives. El Paso County is proud to partner with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to ensure caregivers self-identify and have the resources needed to support their veterans and families. We strongly encourage all local caregivers to visit HiddenHeroes.org for more information on how to register.”

The I Am A Caregiver campaign has received widespread support from local leaders. State Senator Cesar J. Blanco commented, “In a community that over 46,000 veterans call home, I am thrilled to hear that the Elizabeth Dole Foundation has picked El Paso to launch their I Am A Caregiver campaign. Upholding our commitment to honoring our veterans also means taking care of those who care of them. This national campaign will highlight the vital role of caregivers in our community, ensuring they receive the support and recognition they deserve.”

Military and veteran caregivers first recognized by the Foundation as Hidden Heroes, are family members and friends who care for wounded, ill, and injured service members and veterans. Caregivers are responsible for supporting their veterans' activities of daily living, doctors' appointments, mental and emotional health, and household tasks.

I Am A Caregiver seeks to build on the work being done by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to grow the network of military and veteran caregivers across the El Paso region and nationwide. If you are a caregiver and want to learn more about the resources and support available to you, please visit HiddenHeroes.org.

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