EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 712

EXPANDING THE ALABAMA EXECUTIVE VETERANS NETWORK KNOWN AS ALAVETNET

WHEREAS Alabama ranks third in the Nation in the number of persons deployed to support the Global War on Terrorism, with over 30,000 troops deployed;

WHEREAS Alabama's service members, including National Guard and Reserve personnel, continue to experience multiple deployments to active theaters of war and to provide domestic and international assistance in response to natural disasters and other humanitarian missions, separating them from family, community, and traditional supports for extended periods of time;

WHEREAS service members and veterans are assets to their families, communities, and our State, with high potential to be active citizens;

WHEREAS an ongoing, comprehensive understanding of the strengths and needs of Alabama service members, veterans, and their families is necessary to realize Alabama's innovative vision of next-generation care for these groups;

WHEREAS the Alabama Executive Veterans Network ("AlaVetNet") was established by Executive Order No. 664 (formerly Executive Order No. 42), dated December 10, 2013, to be an interagency planning and coordinating body assisting service members, veterans, and their families;

WHEREAS the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recognized AlaVetNet as the Nation's most innovative state veterans program in February 2017;

WHEREAS AlaVetNet will more effectively aid service members, veterans, and their families if it is free to address emerging issues confronting these groups such as underemployment, homelessness, suicide, and opiate addiction;

WHEREAS the addition of certain agencies—specifically, the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Alabama Department of Commerce, and the Alabama Office of Information Technology—will enhance AlaVetNet's ability to assist service members, veterans, and their families; and

WHEREAS the addition of the Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard as an AlaVetNet co-chair will underscore the importance of assisting current service members and their families in addition to assisting veterans and their families;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Kay Ivey, Governor of the State of Alabama, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Alabama, do hereby continue and expand AlaVetNet, effective immediately, as further set forth below:

1. **Expanded purpose.** The primary purpose of AlaVetNet shall be to identify issues facing service members, veterans, and their families and to find ways to address those issues in communities across Alabama. In fulfilling that purpose, AlaVetNet shall strive for interagency collaboration, public participation, and mutual sharing of information among relevant stakeholders. For example, AlaVetNet shall support Alabama institutions of higher education in their efforts to collect data about the needs and strengths of service members, veterans, and their families. AlaVetNet shall focus on any issues it deems pertinent to the fulfillment of these purposes, which may include emerging issues such as underemployment, homelessness, suicide, and opiate addiction.

2. **New strategic plan.** AlaVetNet shall develop a strategic plan for accomplishing its purposes and shall provide a copy of this plan to the Governor by January 31, 2018. Upon approval by the Governor, AlaVetNet shall continually monitor and evaluate implementation of the plan and provide periodic updates and recommendations to the Governor as necessary.

3. **Expanded membership.** AlaVetNet shall consist of the chief officer, or his or her designee, of each of the following participating agencies and organizations: the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs; the Alabama Department of Mental Health; the Alabama National Guard; the Alabama Department of Labor; the Office of the Attorney General

of Alabama; the Alabama Department of Education; the Alabama Department of Corrections; the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles; the Alabama Department of Commerce; the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs; the Alabama Community College System; the Alabama Commission on Higher Education; the Alabama Department on Public Health; the Alabama Medicaid Agency; the Alabama Department of Human Resources; the Alabama Department of Transportation; the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency; the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts; and the Alabama Office of Information Technology. AlaVetNet co-chairs may appoint additional members, such as representatives of reputable non-profit organizations, that they deem advisable. The membership of AlaVetNet shall reflect the racial, gender, geographic, urban/rural, and economic diversity of the State, and all AlaVetNet members shall serve without compensation.

4. **Expanded leadership.** The Commissioners of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs and the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard shall serve as co-chairs of AlaVetNet. They shall be responsible for the general administration, supervision, and monitoring of all AlaVetNet activities.

5. **Conduct of business.** AlaVetNet shall define the roles and responsibilities of all participating agencies in fulfilling the AlaVetNet strategic plan. In addition, AlaVetNet shall adopt any necessary rules for its internal operation and the conduct of its business. AlaVetNet shall meet at least quarterly, and these meetings shall be open to the public. AlaVetNet, and any subsidiary groups organized under its auspices, may meet via teleconference.

6. **State agency cooperation.** State agencies and other state-funded entities shall cooperate with AlaVetNet and provide information requested by AlaVetNet.

7. **Prior related orders.** This order supersedes Executive Order No. 664 (formerly Executive Order No. 42), dated December 10, 2013, which originally created AlaVetNet. Where there is any conflict with any provision of any previously signed Executive Order, the provisions of this Executive Order shall prevail.

DONE AND ORDERED this 8th day of November, 2017.

Kay Ivey

KAY IVEY
Governor

ATTESTED

John H. Merrill

JOHN H. MERRILL
Secretary of State