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Williams' Monument Initiative Gets White House Backing

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation has a goal, and now it has some pretty strong backing — from the White House.

Williams and his foundation staff met with First Lady Michelle Obama and her staff in the East Wing Monday morning. They were joined by staff members of the First Lady and Jill Biden's Joining Forces campaign, a national initiative giving civilians a platform on which to give back to service members and their families, as well as Ryan Robertson, who is in charge of military affairs for President Barack Obama.

Brent Casey, executive Director of the foundation and Williams' grandson, said the East Wing got word of what the foundation is doing and wanted to hear more about it.

The foundation has a goal to get a Gold Star Family Memorial Monument in all 50 states. A Gold Star Family is a family that has lost a loved one who was serving in the Armed Forces.

Casey said the support is monumental for the foundation.

"This changes things and raises things to a whole new level for us," Casey said. "Because we only formed a year and half ago we are just finding our feet and to have the support of White House will help us greatly in credibility, establishing credence with sponsors... For our foundations at such a young stage to have as great as support as you can get in our country, it's monumental."

Casey said the group spent two hours speaking with staff and sharing their dream.

"Our country does it here and there, but really our country and as our history goes, we've never done anything to recognize these families who have sacrificed a family member," Casey said.

He said his grandfather has been to the White House about a dozen times, but other than receiving his Medal of Honor in 1945, this was the biggest day for him.

"He's getting ready to be 92 and to see his vision recognized at the White House, that was just huge," Casey said.

Williams is the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Casey said in return for the support, the foundation also pledges to support the Joining Forces initiative.

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