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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 581 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY SCHLEGEL CULVER, BARRAR, HAHN, HEFFLEY, MILLARD,  
WATSON, PHILLIPS-HILL, WARD, REESE, PICKETT, KAUFFMAN,  
CALTAGIRONE, READSHAW, R. BROWN, A. HARRIS, ROZZI, KORTZ,  
GINGRICH, TOEPEL, D. PARKER, JAMES, REGAN, TOPPER, MASSER,  
EVERETT, COX, HARHAI AND PASHINSKI, NOVEMBER 9, 2015

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, NOVEMBER 9, 2015

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## A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the President of the United States and Congress to pass  
2 the Permanent Department of Veterans Affairs Choice Card Act  
3 of 2015.

4 WHEREAS, On August 5, 2015, Senator John McCain introduced  
5 legislation that would make the Choice Program of the Department  
6 of Veterans Affairs permanent, remove the 40-mile limit and make  
7 all veterans eligible for the Choice Program; and

8 WHEREAS, On August 7, 2014, United States President Barack  
9 Obama signed into law the Veterans Access, Choice, and  
10 Accountability Act of 2014, which created the temporary three-  
11 year Choice Program to improve veterans' access to health care  
12 by allowing eligible veterans to use eligible health care  
13 providers outside of the Veterans Affairs (VA) system; and

14 WHEREAS, The current Choice Program only considers veterans  
15 who live more than 40 miles from the closest VA health care  
16 facility or are told by their local VA medical facility that

1 they need to wait more than 30 days from their preferred date or  
2 the date medically provided by their physicians to be eligible  
3 to use approved non-VA health care providers; and

4 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has been  
5 reluctant in the implementation of the Choice Program and has  
6 failed to aptly distribute and educate veterans about Choice  
7 Cards; and

8 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has restricted  
9 veteran eligibility to receive the card and has removed critical  
10 funding from the program altogether; and

11 WHEREAS, Many scandals erupted in 2014 due to health care  
12 delays and appointment wait times at VA health facilities  
13 throughout the nation; and

14 WHEREAS, In addition to allowing veterans to see a private  
15 physician if they cannot get an appointment at a VA facility  
16 within 30 days or if the veteran lives more than 40 miles from a  
17 VA facility, the Permanent Department of Veterans Affairs Choice  
18 Card Act of 2015 ensures that the specific and unique needs of  
19 veterans are addressed; and

20 WHEREAS, As the Permanent Department of Veterans Affairs  
21 Choice Card Act of 2015 will make the Choice Program permanent,  
22 lingering uncertainty about this program will be removed,  
23 leading to a faster implementation of private care options for  
24 veterans; and

25 WHEREAS, On far too many occasions honorable veterans of the  
26 United States Armed Forces have not been able to access quality  
27 health care in a reasonable time frame; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
29 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the President and the  
30 Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation to support the passage of

1 the Permanent Department of Veterans Affairs Choice Card Act of  
2 2015; and be it further

3       RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to  
4 the President, to the presiding officers of each house of  
5 Congress and to each member of Congress from Pennsylvania.