
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 263 Session of
2014

INTRODUCED BY SOLOBAY, TEPLITZ, TOMLINSON, STACK, WASHINGTON,
PILEGGI, FERLO, BREWSTER, SMITH, KASUNIC, ALLOWAY, WHITE,
HUGHES, ERICKSON, FONTANA, FARNESE, RAFFERTY, COSTA,
VULAKOVICH, YUDICHAK, MENSCH AND BRUBAKER, JANUARY 13, 2014

REFERRED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
JANUARY 13, 2014

A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the President and the Congress of the United
2 States to increase funding for the United States Department
3 of Veterans Affairs so it may provide exceptional services to
4 all veterans, including the veterans residing in this
5 Commonwealth.

6 WHEREAS, The mission of the United States Department of
7 Veterans Affairs is to fulfill President Lincoln's promise "[t]o
8 care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow
9 and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who
10 are America's veterans; and

11 WHEREAS, The official veteran population projection as of
12 September 30, 2011, was 22,676,149 of whom 2,224,547, or
13 approximately 9%, were women; and

14 WHEREAS, There are an estimated 2.6 million veterans of the
15 Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts; and

16 WHEREAS, The female veteran population is projected to
17 increase approximately 18% of the total veteran population by
18 the year 2040; and

1 WHEREAS, African Americans currently represent approximately
2 11% of the veteran population, with the percentage projected to
3 increase to more than 16% by 2040; and

4 WHEREAS, Individuals of Hispanic descent currently represent
5 approximately 6% of the veteran population with the percentage
6 projected to increase to approximately 12% by 2040; and

7 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs has seen a steady
8 increase in the number of veterans seeking mental health care in
9 recent years, from about 927,000 cases in fiscal year 2006 to
10 more than 1.3 million in fiscal year 2012; and

11 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs views and treats
12 a range of physical and mental health issues, including, but not
13 limited to, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain
14 injury, military sexual trauma, homelessness and suicide; and

15 WHEREAS, Post-traumatic stress disorder is found in 11% to
16 20% of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts; and

17 WHEREAS, Traumatic brain injury accounts for 19% of claims by
18 veterans from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

19 WHEREAS, Military sexual trauma encompasses rape, sexual
20 assault and sexual harassment and an estimated 26,000 service
21 members experienced unwanted sexual contact between the 2011
22 fiscal year and the 2012 fiscal year; and

23 WHEREAS, According to the Department of Defense, 3,374 cases
24 of military sexual trauma were reported in the 2012 fiscal year;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, Homelessness and death by suicide are two of the
27 biggest issues facing veterans today; and

28 WHEREAS, An estimated 13% of the adult homeless population
29 consists of veterans; and

30 WHEREAS, As of 2012, the average number of veterans dying

1 from suicide every day ranges from 18 to 22; and

2 WHEREAS, There are approximately 995,135 veterans currently
3 residing in this Commonwealth; and

4 WHEREAS, The regional offices of the Department of Veterans
5 Affairs process compensation, pension, education, vocational
6 rehabilitation and employment, loan guaranty and insurance
7 claims for veterans, their families and survivors; and

8 WHEREAS, In excess of 16,000 claims are currently pending in
9 the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office and Insurance
10 Center in Philadelphia; and

11 WHEREAS, As of November 2010, approximately 537,000 veterans
12 from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have sought health
13 care from the Department of Veterans Affairs in this
14 Commonwealth since returning Stateside; and

15 WHEREAS, The average claim at the Department of Veterans
16 Affairs Regional Office and Insurance Center in Philadelphia has
17 been pending 242 days, and the average pending claim at the
18 Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office and Insurance
19 Center in Pittsburgh is 290 days; and

20 WHEREAS, As of September 30, 2013, there were 725,469 pending
21 claims throughout the United States, 421,793 of which were
22 pending over 125 days; and

23 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs' backlog dates to
24 1994, when the time to process a claim went from 150 days to
25 more than 200 days; and

26 WHEREAS, Our veterans deserve timely access to services that
27 have the ability to ensure physical shelter and a high caliber
28 of mental health treatment necessary for a quality life; and

29 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs faces issues that
30 can be rectified through proper funding; therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the Senate memorialize the President and the
2 Congress of the United States to increase funding for the United
3 States Department of Veterans Affairs so it may provide
4 exceptional services to all veterans, including the veterans
5 residing in this Commonwealth; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
7 the President of the United States, the presiding officers of
8 each house of Congress and to each member of Congress from
9 Pennsylvania.