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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 313 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY FARRY, DeLISSIO, RYAN, DEAN, FRANKEL, MURT,  
MACKENZIE, DAVIS, WARD, MILLARD, ROZZI, READSHAW, D. COSTA,  
DONATUCCI, McNEILL, SCHLOSSBERG, BULLOCK, BOBACK, V. BROWN,  
DRISCOLL, THOMAS, O'BRIEN, STAATS, FREEMAN, WATSON,  
FITZGERALD, SAINATO, GOODMAN, DeLUCA, GILLEN, CORBIN,  
PASHINSKI AND BAKER, MAY 5, 2017

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, MAY 5, 2017

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A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Establishing the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care.

2 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of  
3 Veterans Affairs, the projected veteran population nationwide is  
4 23,000,000, with women making up an estimated 10% of that  
5 population; and

6 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs  
7 estimates the percentage of female veterans between 2010 and  
8 2040 will increase from 9% in 2010 to 18% in 2040; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of  
10 Veterans Affairs, as of September 2012, this Commonwealth was  
11 home to approximately 981,000 veterans, including 719,000  
12 wartime veterans from World War II through the Gulf War; and

13 WHEREAS, Females comprise approximately 80,000 of the wartime  
14 veterans; and

15 WHEREAS, The number of women veterans will increase with the

1 end of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Women veterans often face unique challenges in  
4 transitioning from active duty to civilian life; and

5 WHEREAS, The challenging needs facing women veterans can  
6 often be overlooked when providing services to a large veteran  
7 population; and

8 WHEREAS, Ensuring the availability of specialized services  
9 for physical and mental health, including treatment of post-  
10 traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military  
11 sexual trauma and alcohol and substance abuse, tailored to the  
12 specific needs of women veterans is essential to ensure that our  
13 returning veterans receive proper care; and

14 WHEREAS, Establishing a task force to study the issues facing  
15 women veterans and to make recommendations to the Governor and  
16 the General Assembly will provide much-needed information and  
17 insight from those who address the issues on a daily basis;  
18 therefore be it

19 RESOLVED (the Senate concurring), That the Task Force on  
20 Women Veterans' Health Care be established; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
22 consist of 17 members who shall be appointed as follows within  
23 25 days after the adoption of this resolution by both chambers:

24 (1) Two members of the Senate, one appointed by the  
25 President pro tempore and one appointed by the Minority  
26 Leader of the Senate.

27 (2) Two members of the House of Representatives, one  
28 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and  
29 one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of  
30 Representatives.

1           (3) Thirteen members appointed by the Governor as  
2 follows:

3           (i) the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs  
4 of the Pennsylvania National Guard;

5           (ii) the Secretary of Health;

6           (iii) the Secretary of Human Services;

7           (iv) the Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs;

8           (v) four women veterans who are residents of this  
9 Commonwealth;

10          (vi) a representative from the health care provider  
11 community in this Commonwealth who has experience in  
12 providing health care to returning women veterans;

13          (vii) a representative from the Commonwealth's  
14 mental health care provider community with experience in  
15 providing mental health care treatment to returning women  
16 veterans;

17          (viii) a representative from the Commonwealth's  
18 substance abuse and addiction treatment provider  
19 community with experience in providing substance abuse  
20 and addiction treatment to returning women veterans;

21          (ix) a representative from a Commonwealth advocacy  
22 group that represents the interests of sexual assault  
23 victims with experience in providing services to women  
24 veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma,  
25 including harassment or abuse;

26          (x) a representative from a county veteran's court;

27 and

28          (xi) the chairman of the State Veterans' Commission;

29 and be it further

30          RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care

1 study the health care needs of women veterans, including:

2 (1) quality of and access to mental health services,  
3 including services and treatment for post-traumatic stress  
4 disorder and traumatic brain injury;

5 (2) in-patient treatment availability;

6 (3) adequacy and availability of appropriate women  
7 veterans' health care within the Federal health care system  
8 and this Commonwealth; and

9 (4) adequacy, quality of and access to services  
10 providing for the identification and treatment of military  
11 sexual trauma, including sexual harassment or abuse;

12 and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
14 identify other needs relating to the provisions of women  
15 veterans' health care services and make recommendations to the  
16 General Assembly and the Governor to address those needs; and be  
17 it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
19 consult with Federal, State and local entities in completing the  
20 study, including:

21 (1) The Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation.

22 (2) The United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

23 (3) The County Commissioners Association of  
24 Pennsylvania.

25 (4) The Pennsylvania Municipal League.

26 (5) The Pennsylvania Medical Society.

27 (6) The Hospital and Health System Association of  
28 Pennsylvania.

29 (7) Veterans organizations or other organizations or  
30 associations that advocate for women veterans;

1 and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
3 elect one of its members to serve as chairperson; and be it  
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
6 conduct its business as follows:

7 (1) The physical presence of nine members constitutes a  
8 quorum of the task force.

9 (2) Action of the task force shall be authorized or  
10 ratified by a majority vote of its members.

11 (3) A member not physically present may participate by  
12 teleconference or video conference.

13 (4) The following shall apply:

14 (i) The task force shall meet as necessary, but no  
15 fewer than five times prior to April 30, 2018. Additional  
16 meetings may be called by the chairperson as necessary.

17 (ii) The chairperson shall schedule a meeting upon  
18 written request of eight members of the task force.

19 (iii) The first meeting shall be convened within 45  
20 days of the adoption of this resolution by both chambers  
21 at a time and place established by the Governor.

22 (iv) The task force shall hold public hearings as  
23 necessary to obtain the information required to conduct  
24 its review.

25 (v) Members may not receive compensation but shall  
26 be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses  
27 incurred in service of the task force;

28 and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the Department of Health and the Department of  
30 Military and Veterans Affairs provide staff support to the task

1 force; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That, upon request of the Task Force on Women  
3 Veterans' Health Care, a State agency assist the task force in  
4 the completion of its duties, including, to the extent permitted  
5 by law relating to confidentiality, furnishing information and  
6 advice to members of the task force necessary to perform their  
7 duties; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
9 have the following powers:

10 (1) To examine and analyze the current delivery of  
11 health care services to women veterans at the Federal and  
12 State level.

13 (2) To review and analyze law, procedures, practices and  
14 rules relating to delivery of health care services to women  
15 veterans.

16 (3) To hold public hearings for the taking of testimony  
17 and the requesting of documents.

18 (4) To administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses  
19 appearing before the task force at the request of the  
20 chairperson;

21 and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
23 have the following duties:

24 (1) To accept and review written comments from  
25 individuals and organizations.

26 (2) To make, by April 30, 2018, a final report to the  
27 Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

28 (3) To include in the report under paragraph (2)  
29 recommendations to:

30 (i) improve the delivery of health care services to

1 women veterans; and

2 (ii) implement necessary changes in State statutes  
3 and practices, policies and procedures relating to the  
4 delivery of health care services to women veterans.

5 (4) To make reports as follows:

6 (i) The task force may file status reports and  
7 updates with the Governor, the Senate and the House of  
8 Representatives as it deems appropriate.

9 (ii) A report under this paragraph shall be adopted  
10 at a public meeting.

11 (iii) A report under this paragraph shall be a  
12 public record under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6,  
13 No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law;

14 and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
16 expire May 31, 2018.