

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 5

Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY BOSCOLA, VULAKOVICH, COSTA, HUGHES, FONTANA,
FARNESE, BLAKE, SCHWANK, BREWSTER, TARTAGLIONE, YUDICHAK,
RAFFERTY, MENSCH AND BROWNE, JANUARY 20, 2017

SENATOR VULAKOVICH, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
AS AMENDED, OCTOBER 17, 2017

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 approximately 23 million, with women making up an estimated 10%
5 of that population; and

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

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

14 WHEREAS, Women comprise approximately 80,000 of the wartime
15 veterans from this Commonwealth; and

16 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 in providing services to such a large
7 veteran 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 if the
13 Commonwealth wants to ensure that our returning veterans receive
14 proper care; and

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

20 RESOLVED (the House of Representatives concurring), That the
21 Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care be established; and be
22 it further

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

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

29 (2) Two members of the House of Representatives, one
30 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and

1 one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
2 Representatives.

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

5 (i) the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs
6 of the Pennsylvania National Guard, WHO SHALL SERVE AS <--
7 CHAIRPERSON OF THE TASK FORCE;

8 (ii) the Secretary of Health OR A DESIGNEE; <--

9 (iii) the Secretary of Human Services OR A DESIGNEE; <--

10 (iv) the Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs OR A <--
11 DESIGNEE;

12 (v) four women veterans who are residents of this
13 Commonwealth;

14 (vi) a representative from the health care provider
15 community in this Commonwealth who has experience in
16 providing health care to returning women veterans;

17 (vii) a representative from this Commonwealth's
18 mental health care provider community with experience in
19 providing mental health care treatment to returning women
20 veterans;

21 (viii) a representative from this Commonwealth's
22 substance abuse and addiction treatment provider
23 community with experience in providing substance abuse
24 and addiction treatment to returning women veterans;

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

30 (x) the chairman of the State Veterans' Commission;

1 and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
3 study the health care needs of women veterans, including, but
4 not limited to:

5 (1) quality of and access to mental health services,
6 including services and treatment for post-traumatic stress
7 disorder and traumatic brain injury;

8 (2) in-patient treatment availability;

9 (3) adequacy and availability of appropriate women
10 veterans' health care within the Federal health care system
11 and this Commonwealth; and

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

15 and be it further

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

21 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
22 consult with Federal, State and local entities in completing its
23 study, including:

24 (1) The Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation.

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

26 (3) The County Commissioners Association of
27 Pennsylvania.

28 (4) The Pennsylvania League of Cities and
29 Municipalities.

30 (5) THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF BOROUGHES.

<--

1 (6) THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP
2 COMMISSIONERS.

3 (7) THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP
4 SUPERVISORS.

5 ~~(5)~~ (8) The Pennsylvania Medical Society. <--

6 ~~(6)~~ (9) The Hospital Association of Pennsylvania. <--

7 ~~(7) Veterans organizations or~~ (10) THE STATE VETERANS' <--
8 COMMISSION, THE PENNSYLVANIA WAR VETERANS COUNCIL, VETERANS
9 ORGANIZATIONS AND other organizations or associations that
10 advocate for women veterans;

11 and be it further

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

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

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

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

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

23 (4) The following shall apply:

24 (i) The task force shall meet as necessary, but no
25 fewer than five times prior to November 30, 2018.

26 Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson as
27 necessary.

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

30 (iii) The first meeting shall be convened within 45

1 days of the adoption of this resolution by both chambers
2 at a time and place established by the Governor.

3 (iv) The task force shall hold public hearings as
4 necessary to obtain the information required to conduct
5 its review.

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

9 and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Department of Health and the Department of
11 Military and Veterans Affairs provide staff support to the task
12 force; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That, upon request of the Task Force on Women
14 Veterans' Health Care, a State agency assist the task force in
15 the completion of its duties, including, to the extent permitted
16 by law relating to confidentiality, to furnish information and
17 advice to members of the task force necessary to perform their
18 duties; and be it further

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

21 (1) To examine and analyze the current delivery of
22 health care services to women veterans at the Federal and
23 State level.

24 (2) To review and analyze law, procedures, practices and
25 rules relating to delivery of health care services to women
26 veterans.

27 (3) To hold public hearings to take testimony and
28 request documents.

29 (4) To administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses
30 appearing before the task force at the request of the

1 chairperson;

2 and be it further

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

5 (1) To accept and review written comments from
6 individuals and organizations.

7 (2) To make, by November 30, 2018, a final report to the
8 Governor, THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS AND <--
9 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE, THE
10 CHAIRPERSON OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
11 PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, the
12 Senate and the House of Representatives.

13 (3) To include in the report under paragraph (2)
14 recommendations based on its review:

15 (i) To improve the delivery of health care services
16 to women veterans.

17 (ii) To implement any necessary changes in State
18 statutes and practices, policies and procedures relating
19 to the delivery of health care services to women
20 veterans.

21 (4) To make reports as follows:

22 (i) The task force may file status reports and
23 updates with the Governor, the ~~Senate~~ and VETERANS <--
24 AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE OF THE
25 SENATE AND THE VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
26 PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE OF the House of Representatives as
27 it deems appropriate.

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

30 (iii) A report under this paragraph shall be a

1 public record under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6,
2 No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law;
3 and be it further
4 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
5 expire December 31, 2018.