

By: Van de Putte

S.R. No. 9

SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Military veterans who have served their country honorably and who were promised and have earned health care and benefits from the federal government through the Department of Veterans Affairs are now in need of these benefits; and

WHEREAS, The funding of the health care programs of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs has failed to reflect the admission of newly eligible veterans in the wake of the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 and has fallen short of the amount needed to counter soaring medical care inflation, resulting in a funding shortfall of at least \$10 billion; and

WHEREAS, The current discretionary method of funding the health care programs of the Veterans Health Administration is uncertain and is subject annually to the whims and competing priorities of congress, to the detriment of the veterans being served; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Veterans of America organization supports the adoption of a new funding mechanism for the health care programs of the Veterans Health Administration that is indexed to medical inflation and the per capita use of the administration's health care system; and

WHEREAS, The substantial delay in adjudicating veterans' claims for service-connected disability compensation is the

cause of much anguish and anger among veterans and is the result of a lack of funding of the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, which has led to an insufficient number of adjudicators and the inadequate training and supervision of adjudicators; and

WHEREAS, While the vast majority of Department of Veterans Affairs employees are dedicated to serving veterans, it is necessary to ensure that employee accountability standards be strengthened at senior and junior levels; and

WHEREAS, While more than five million veterans use the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs for their health care needs, tens of thousands more are eligible for benefits of which they are unaware due to inadequate outreach efforts by the department; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 79th Legislature, 3rd Called Session, hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to address problems in the Department of Veterans Affairs related to the provision of health care and benefits, the adjudication of claims, accountability, and outreach and to enact legislation that creates an appropriation formula that assures predictable and adequate funding of the health care programs of the Veterans Health Administration; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the secretary of the senate forward official copies of this Resolution to the secretary of veterans affairs, the president of the United States, the president of the senate and speaker of the house of representatives of the United

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States Congress, and all members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this Resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.