

By: Garcia

H.C.R. No. 1

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

5           WHEREAS, Federal discretionary funding is controlled by the  
6 executive branch and the United States Congress through the budget  
7 and appropriations process; and

8           WHEREAS, Direct funding provides the Department of Veterans  
9 Affairs with a reliable, predictable, and consistent source of  
10 funding to provide timely, efficient, and high-quality health care  
11 for our veterans; and

12           WHEREAS, Currently almost 90 percent of federal health care  
13 spending is direct rather than discretionary, and only the funding  
14 for health care for active duty military, Native Americans, and  
15 veterans is subject to the discretion of the United States  
16 Congress; and

17           WHEREAS, Discretionary funding for health care lags behind  
18 both medical inflation and the increased demand for services; for  
19 example, the enrollment for veterans' health care increased 134  
20 percent between fiscal years 1996 and 2004 yet funding increased  
21 only 34 percent during the same period when adjusted to 1996  
22 dollars; and

23           WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs is the largest  
24 integrated health care system in the United States and has four

1 critical health care missions: to provide health care to veterans,  
2 to educate and train health care personnel, to conduct medical  
3 research, and to serve as a backup to the United States Department  
4 of Defense and support communities in times of crisis; and

5 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs operates 157  
6 hospitals, with at least one in each of the contiguous states,  
7 Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia; and

8 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs operates more  
9 than 850 ambulatory care and community-based outpatient clinics,  
10 132 nursing homes, 42 residential rehabilitation treatment  
11 programs, and 88 home care programs; and

12 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs provides a wide  
13 range of specialized services to meet the unique needs of veterans,  
14 including spinal cord injury and dysfunction care and  
15 rehabilitation, blind rehabilitation, traumatic brain injury care,  
16 post-traumatic stress disorder treatment, amputee care and  
17 prosthetics programs, mental health and substance abuse programs,  
18 and long-term care programs; and

19 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs health care  
20 system is severely underfunded, and had funding for the  
21 department's medical programs been allowed to grow proportionately  
22 as the system sought to admit newly eligible veterans following the  
23 eligibility reform legislation in 1996, the current veterans'  
24 health care budget would be approximately \$10 billion more; and

25 WHEREAS, In a spirit of bipartisan accommodation, members of  
26 the United States Congress should collectively resolve the problem  
27 of discretionary funding and jointly fashion an acceptable formula

1 for funding the medical programs of the Department of Veterans  
2 Affairs; now, therefore, be it

3         RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
4 hereby express its profound gratitude for the sacrifices made by  
5 veterans, including those suffering from various medical issues  
6 resulting from injuries that occurred while serving in the United  
7 States Armed Forces at home or abroad; and, be it further

8         RESOLVED, That the legislature hereby respectfully urge the  
9 Congress of the United States to support legislation for veterans'  
10 health care budget reform to allow assured funding; and, be it  
11 further

12         RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
13 copies of this resolution to the secretary of veterans affairs, to  
14 the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of  
15 representatives and the president of the senate of the United  
16 States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to  
17 the congress with the request that this resolution be officially  
18 entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of  
19 the United States of America.