

By: Van de Putte

S.C.R. No. 37

1 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

24 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs is the largest

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

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

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

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

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

26 WHEREAS, In a spirit of bipartisan accommodation, members of
27 the United States Congress should collectively resolve the problem

1 of discretionary funding and jointly fashion an acceptable formula
2 for funding the medical programs of the Department of Veterans
3 Affairs; now, therefore, be it

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

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

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