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By:  Miller H.C.R. No. 91

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs is charged with ensuring the health and well-being of the nation's veterans, but in recent years, its failure to adequately perform its mission has been the source of scandal; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, the United States Congress responded to unconscionable delays and denials of care at VA facilities by passing the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018, or VA MISSION Act, which requires continued access to private medical care providers for veterans if the VA does not offer the care or services the veteran requires, if the VA does not operate a full-service medical facility in the state in which the veteran resides, if the veteran was eligible for care in the community under the 40-mile rule in the Veterans Choice Program, or when the veteran meets certain other requirements; and

WHEREAS, By expanding the reforms established in the Veterans Choice Act, The VA MISSION Act improves veteran access to walk-in care as long as that veteran has used VA health care services within a 24-month time period prior to requesting walk-in services; by increasing its contracts with community-based health care providers, the VA has drastically improved the availability of walk-in services; and

WHEREAS, Important changes to the VA Comprehensive Assistance For Family Caregivers program include expanded eligibility for veterans with service-connected medical issues; previously, access was more limited and emphasized post-9/11 military service; and

WHEREAS, The VA has tried to address the opioid epidemic sweeping the nation by developing "Safe Opioid" procedures for VA prescriptions; it now requires all its care providers, including contractors, to use evidence-based guidelines for prescribing opioid-based painkillers; in addition, it requires that community health care providers have appropriate access to patient medical history, encompassing all medication prescribed; and

WHEREAS, Our nation's veterans have made enormous sacrifices to guarantee our freedoms, and although the nation can never fully repay its debt of gratitude, it can and should ensure timely access to the highest quality of medical care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to enact legislation to ensure that all veterans receive in a timely manner the level of medical care that they have earned and that they so richly deserve; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.