



State of Tennessee

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 58

By Representatives Raper, McCalmon, Capley, Doggett, Hawk, Russell, Kumar, Todd, Eldridge, Vital, Ragan, Littleton, Moody, Alexander, Cepicky, Helton-Haynes, Thompson, Miller

and

Senators Briggs, Lowe

A RESOLUTION to encourage the federal government to provide free health care for all honorably discharged veterans.

WHEREAS, according to figures from the Department of Defense and the United States Census Bureau, in 2020 there were approximately 2.1 million service members in the active and reserve components of the United States military, equal to less than one percent of the adult population of the United States; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2021 American Community Survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau, military veterans comprise less than six and one-half percent of the adult population of the United States; and

WHEREAS, since 2001, between 1.9 and 3 million military servicemembers served in post-9/11 combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, with more than half having deployed more than once, providing great service and sacrifice for this country; and

WHEREAS, health care is available to veterans who are determined to have a service-connected disability by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), although such care is free only for those veterans with a disability rating of at least fifty percent or for health conditions related to their military service; and

WHEREAS, there remains a significant number of veterans who are ineligible to receive free health care even after having served in a theater of combat operations, although the federal government has recently taken a significant step by expanding free healthcare services to such veterans for up to ten years after discharge for any condition related to service in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not live in close proximity to a VA medical facility, and while the VA MISSION Act of 2018 increases access to community care, veterans must receive approval from the department prior to obtaining care from a community provider and still must be eligible for health care from the VA to be eligible for the community care program; and

WHEREAS, health care available to disabled veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs is considered a benefit and not an entitlement like it is for retired military service members; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly believes providing free health care for life for veterans who have served honorably is the least the federal government can do in exchange for their devoted service to this country; now, therefore,

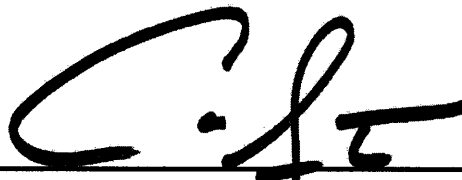
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby encourage the federal government to provide free health care for life for all veterans who have been honorably discharged; to expand the community care program to include these veterans; and to consider whether providing health care for these veterans through the VA healthcare system or through Medicare expansion is best to accomplish these goals.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution is transmitted to the President of the United States and each member of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation.

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ADOPTED: March 30, 2023



CAMERON SEXTON, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



RANDY MCNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 10th day of April 2023



BILL LEE, GOVERNOR