

REVENUE: Revenue statement issued

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed and Be Referred to the Committee on Tax Credits by prior reference
Vote:	6 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Boone, Huffman, Matthews, Parrish, Esquivel, Witt
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Jill Petty, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/15, 3/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Creates tax credit for mental health professionals who provide services to veterans. Applies to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2011.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Demand for mental health care outpacing supply
- Geographic limitations on Veterans' Administration system
- Barriers for rural and remote veterans seeking help
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is signature injury of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Expands definition of mental health care provider to include nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists.

BACKGROUND: The 2009 Legislature passed Senate Bill 700, which created a Task Force on Veterans' Reintegration, and House Bill 2718, which created a Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care. Both Task Forces were required to submit recommendations. The Task Force on Veterans' Reintegration found as many as 40 percent of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans had some level of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, depression or other emotional/mental condition. The Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care found that 19 percent of women veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are the victims of Military Sexual Trauma. The Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care indicated the Veterans' Administration has bloated caseloads. House Bill 2404 A is intended to incentivize private mental health workers to see these veterans.