

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

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<b>Action:</b>	Be Adopted and Be Placed on the Consent Calendar
<b>Vote:</b>	8 - 0 - 0
<b>Yeas:</b>	Frederick, Greenlick, Harker, Parrish, Thompson, Weidner, Gilliam, Tomei
<b>Nays:</b>	0
<b>Exc.:</b>	0
<b>Prepared By:</b>	Jennifer Kellar, Administrator
<b>Meeting Dates:</b>	2/16, 3/9

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Urges Congress to mandate the limit on mental health care caseloads.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) considered one of the signature conditions of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Studies indicate that 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans will suffer with PTSD
- Impact of PTSD on Vietnam veterans seeking mental health services since 9/11 increasing demand for mental health services
- 13,000 Oregonians deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan with National Guard
- Over 340,000 veterans in Oregon
- Increasing need for mental health services for veterans and family members
- Mild to severe brain injuries occurring due to veterans experiencing several blast episodes during conflict
- Necessity for Oregon delegation and congressional leaders to support legislation

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:** No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:** A study conducted in 2008 found that a substantial number of service members returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan may face mental health problems. Further, this study determined that mental health professionals are overwhelmed by the volume of their caseloads, resulting in longer waiting periods for veterans seeking care and longer travel times for veterans to access available professionals and access to care. The Legislative Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care received testimony indicating that the average caseload was estimated at exceeding 100 veterans to every counselor. The Task Force determined that high caseloads made them unmanageable and counselors unable to see patients on a recurring basis. Additionally, the Task Force determined that the average, manageable caseload estimate was 60 to every counselor.