

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

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|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Action:</b>        | Be Adopted  |
| <b>Vote:</b>          | 6 - 0 - 0   |
| <b>Yeas:</b>          | Boone, Huffman, Matthews, Parrish, Esquivel, Witt |
| <b>Nays:</b>          | 0   |
| <b>Exc.:</b>          | 0   |
| <b>Prepared By:</b>   | Jill Petty, Administrator                         |
| <b>Meeting Dates:</b> | 4/5   |

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Urges Congress to create trust fund to pay for health care for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Need for mandatory funding for veterans health care

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

**BACKGROUND:** Professor Joseph Stiglitz of Columbia University and Professor Linda Bilmes of Harvard University, authors of “*The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict*” (2008), estimated in recent testimony before Congress that the health costs of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars could exceed 900 billion dollars. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the life time health care needs for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars could be even higher, ultimately surpassing 1 trillion dollars. These cost estimates are based on expectations of higher survival rates, greater incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health conditions, a higher percentage of claimants, and more extensive medical benefits than were available during previous conflicts. Senate Joint Memorial 2 urges Congress to create a trust fund that would pay for the long-term health care costs for the thousands of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.