

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action:	Be Adopted
Vote:	4 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Monnes Anderson, Olsen, President Courtney, Boquist
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Lori Brocker, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/9, 2/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Urges Congress to create trust fund to pay for health care for veterans of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Historical pattern of care for war veterans
- Impact of multiple deployments on members of United States Armed Forces
- Responsibility of states for returning veterans

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 long-term health care costs for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.