

# Senate Joint Memorial 5

Printed pursuant to Senate Interim Rule 213.28 by order of the President of the Senate in conformance with pre-session filing rules, indicating neither advocacy nor opposition on the part of the President (at the request of Senate Interim Committee of Veterans' Affairs)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Urges Congress to mandate limit on caseloads of Veterans Health Administration mental health professionals.

## JOINT MEMORIAL

To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

We, your memorialists, the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

Whereas our nation has no greater duty to our veterans than to provide them with the best medical care possible and to support them with programs and policies that improve their quality of life before, during and after their deployments; and

Whereas the full psychological effect of war is impossible to estimate because symptoms of debilitating conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and depression often take years to appear; and

Whereas 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; and

Whereas a report mandated by Congress in 2008 determined that mental health professionals are overwhelmed by huge caseloads, resulting in long waiting periods for veterans seeking care and longer travel times for veterans to access available professionals; and

Whereas that same report found that veterans facilities have problems retaining mental health professionals; and

Whereas speciality care for mental health conditions is not readily available in many areas of the country because most mental health professionals are concentrated in urban areas; and

Whereas even where speciality care is available, limited health plan coverage may reduce access for veterans seeking care outside of the Veterans Health Administration; and

Whereas many veterans seeking to reintegrate into civilian life seek care in community-based settings, but studies have shown gaps in the quality of care in community-based settings; and

Whereas caseloads are excessive, causing delays in treatment for mental health conditions at a time when many veterans acutely need treatment; now, therefore,

### **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

(1) That the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly urges the Congress of the United States to enact legislation that reduces the patient caseload of Veterans Health Administration mental health professionals to no more than 60.

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1           (2) A copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to the Senate  
2 Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to each member of the Oregon  
3 Congressional Delegation.

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