

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 3

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By: ~~Senator Peters~~ Senators Peters, Astle, Benson, Brinkley, Brochin, Colburn, Conway, Currie, DeGrange, Dyson, Edwards, Ferguson, Forehand, Frosh, Garagiola, Getty, Gladden, Glassman, Jacobs, Jennings, Jones-Rodwell, Kasemeyer, Kelley, King, Kittleman, Klausmeier, Madaleno, Manno, Mathias, McFadden, Middleton, Miller, Montgomery, Muse, Pinsky, Pipkin, Pugh, Ramirez, Raskin, Reilly, Robey, Rosapepe, Shank, Simonaire, Stone, Young, and Zirkin

Introduced and read first time: February 20, 2013

Assigned to: Rules

Re-referred to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs, March 1, 2013

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 23, 2013

RESOLUTION NO. _____

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Crisis in Waiting Periods for Veterans with Disabilities to Receive Services**
3 **from the Federal Veterans Benefits Administration**

4 FOR the purpose of urging that certain actions be taken by certain entities to address
5 the long waiting periods for veterans with disabilities who file disability
6 compensation claims with a certain office to receive services and compensation
7 from the federal Veterans Benefits Administration; providing that a copy of the
8 resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to certain
9 individuals; and generally relating to the crisis in waiting periods for veterans
10 with disabilities to receive services from the federal Veterans Benefits
11 Administration.

12 WHEREAS, Documented significant mistakes regarding medical claims filed
13 with the federal Veterans Benefits Administration mean that many veterans with
14 disabilities are denied full compensation for their injuries, while others are
15 overcompensated; and

16 WHEREAS, Maryland is ranked number one in education, entrepreneurship,
17 and research and development and Maryland should be ranked number one in veteran
18 services; and

EXPLANATION:

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken by amendment.



1 WHEREAS, Veterans who file disability compensation claims at the Baltimore
2 Regional Office of the federal Veterans Benefits Administration face a 25% chance of
3 those claims being mishandled; and

4 WHEREAS, The performance of the Baltimore Regional Office is among the
5 nation's worst, with claims filed by veterans seeking disability compensation pending
6 429 days on average, 6 times the federal Veterans Benefits Administration's goal of
7 125 days, and 162 days longer than the national average; and

8 WHEREAS, The wait for those who file claims with the Baltimore Regional
9 Office, which serves nearly 500,000 veterans living in Maryland, is longer than any of
10 the federal Veterans Benefits Administration's 56 offices; and

11 WHEREAS, The Baltimore Regional Office has a 73.8% accuracy rate, which is
12 the second worst in the country; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
14 General Assembly:

15 (1) urges Congress to fully investigate the actions of the federal
16 Veterans Benefits Administration, including management, information technology,
17 and customer services, that lead to long waiting times for veterans with disabilities to
18 receive compensation and services;

19 (2) urges Congress to hold hearings to identify gaps in management
20 and technology that are causing significant delays in claims and service to veterans
21 with disabilities;

22 (3) urges that an audit be conducted and that there be a
23 reorganization in management of the Baltimore Regional Office of the federal
24 Veterans Benefits Administration;

25 (4) urges the federal Department of Veterans Affairs to formulate and
26 take expeditious steps to stop the mishandling of claims of veterans with disabilities
27 and resolve all issues at the Baltimore Regional Office that are resulting in delayed
28 services and compensation for veterans with disabilities;

29 (5) urges Congress to hold the federal Veterans Benefits
30 Administration accountable for the management issues in the Baltimore Regional
31 Office that are causing distress to veterans; and

32 (6) urges the federal Veterans Benefits Administration to fill critical
33 vacancies in the Baltimore Regional Office to handle the increasing backlog in claims;
34 and be it further

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1 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
2 Legislative Services to the Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs,
3 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.
4 20420; and the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Barbara A. Mikulski
5 and Benjamin L. Cardin, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and
6 Representatives C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger, III, John P. Sarbanes, Donna Edwards,
7 Steny Hamilton Hoyer, Andrew P. Harris, John K. Delaney, Elijah E. Cummings, and
8 Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Approved:

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.