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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PROVIDE SERVICES  
AND BENEFITS FOR RHODE ISLAND VETERANS

Introduced By: Senators Felag, Bates, Pichardo, Ottiano, and Pearson

Date Introduced: February 28, 2013

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1           WHEREAS, In its February 2012 annual report to the General Assembly, the Division of  
2 Veterans' Affairs predicted an increased demand for long-term nursing and dementia care  
3 services, emphasizing that Rhode Island's veterans population of 72,835 is aging; and

4           WHEREAS, Half of all veterans in this state are over 65 years of age; and

5           WHEREAS, The 2012 annual report concludes that the increase in older veterans will  
6 increase the need for veterans services; and

7           WHEREAS, In 2012, over 75 percent of Rhode Island voters approved a state ballot to  
8 provide \$94,000,000 for the construction of a new Veterans' Home and renovations to existing  
9 facilities; and

10          WHEREAS, Not all senior veterans meet the eligibility for the state veterans' home or  
11 instead desire to remain in their home environment; and

12          WHEREAS, As of December 2008, an estimated 25 to 40 percent (400,000 to 640,000  
13 soldiers) of the over 1.6 million American service members deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan  
14 have returned with psychological and neurological injuries associated with Post Traumatic Stress  
15 disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), dubbed the "signature injuries" of the Iraq  
16 War; and

17          WHEREAS, The current estimate of service members who will develop PTSD within a  
18 year of leaving combat is between 10 and 30 percent; and

19          WHEREAS, Approximately 3,000 veterans per year encounter the state's behavioral

1 healthcare system, but there are many more veterans in need of services who do not receive  
2 timely help; and

3 WHEREAS, A 2006 study illustrates the need in Rhode Island for trauma-related  
4 services for veterans from the Gulf Wars (between 2,019 and 6,183 veterans in need), and other  
5 wars (between 10,794 and 33,054 veterans in need); and

6 WHEREAS, Rhode Island does not currently have adequate resources to offer Post  
7 Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) screening, referrals, and  
8 treatment to all veterans upon return from deployment; and

9 WHEREAS, Rhode Island has had tremendous success with a pilot program veterans'  
10 court in directing veterans who are diagnosed with trauma related disorders into a court program  
11 that integrates support and treatment plans with the judicial process; and

12 WHEREAS, Our Federal delegation continually supports the needs and efforts to expand  
13 resources for Rhode Island veterans; now therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests the Congress of the United States to  
15 pass legislation to establish funding for individual states, including Rhode Island, to implement a  
16 home and community based veterans' program; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
18 respectfully urges the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation to support state funding  
19 opportunities to implement recommendations from the President's Joining Forces Initiative to  
20 strengthen behavioral healthcare systems and supportive services for returning service members,  
21 veterans, and their families; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests the Congress of the United States to  
23 authorize the funding of the SERVE ACT through the Office of National Drug Control Policy to  
24 develop and implement a veterans' treatment court; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and is hereby authorized and directed to  
26 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Honorable Jack Reed and Honorable  
27 Sheldon Whitehouse, US Senators, and the Honorable James R. Langevin and Honorable David  
28 N. Cicilline, US Representatives.

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