



## Legislation Text

**File #:** Res 1064-2003, **Version:** \*

Res. No. 1064

Resolution urging Congress to adopt House of Representatives Bill 270 and Senate Bill 967, collectively known as the "Veterans Equal Treatment Act," which would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to replace the formula used for the allocation of funds appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical care to different geographic regions of the nation, known as the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation, with a more equitable formula.

By Council Members Nelson, Sanders, Gerson, Addabbo, Avella, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Fidler, Gennaro, Gentile, Jackson, Jennings, Quinn, Sears, Vann, Weprin and Liu

Whereas, According to the United States General Accounting Office ("GAO"), the Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA") spent \$21 billion in fiscal year 2001 to treat 3.8 million veterans, most of whom had service-connected disabilities or low incomes; and

Whereas, Since 1997, the VA has used the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) system to allocate most of its medical care appropriation; and

Whereas, According to the February 28, 2002 GAO report entitled "VA Health Care: Allocation Changes Would Better Align Resources with Workload," the VERA formula has resulted in a system of inequitable care at veterans hospitals in different regions of the country; and

Whereas, The VERA formula has resulted in a system in which veterans in some regions of the country are forced to compete with veterans in other regions for critical medical care dollars; and

Whereas, According to the GAO report, VERA shifted \$921 million from networks located primarily in the Northeast and Midwest to networks located in the South and West in fiscal year 2001; and

Whereas, The shift of such funds has had a disproportionately negative effect on New York City; and

Whereas, Any VA funding system for medical services should be providing funding to all veterans, regardless of where they live, to ensure that all veterans have access to the level and quality of care that they have earned and deserve; and

Whereas, United States Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen of New Jersey introduced House Bill 270, and United States Senator Chuck Schumer introduced the companion bill, Senate Bill 967, both of which are entitled "Veterans Equal Treatment Act" (the "Act"); and

Whereas, The Act would replace the VERA formula with a new formula for the allocation of funds appropriated to the VA for medical care to the twenty-two national service regions, known as Veterans Integrated Service Networks ("VISN"); and

Whereas, The Act would require that when appropriating funds for medical care, the Secretary of the VA must consider the number of veterans moving into the geographic area of the VISN, the median age of veterans in that VISN, the number of veterans in that VISN requiring complex care or home care and the age of VA health care facilities in that VISN; and

Whereas, The Act also specifies that in fiscal years where the allocation of funds appropriated to the VA for medical care has increased, the funds provided to the VISNs may not be less than the amount provided to the VISNs for the preceding year; and

Whereas, The implementation of a new formula would eliminate the cut in funding for veterans health care facilities experienced in New York and New Jersey; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges Congress to adopt House of Representatives Bill 270 and Senate Bill 967, collectively known as the "Veterans Equal Treatment Act," which would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to replace the formula used for the allocation of funds appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical care to different geographic regions of the nation, known as the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation, with a more equitable formula.

GRS

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