



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 128

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation which would require the Division of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study regarding homeless female veterans in New York.

By Council Members Vallone and Brannan

Whereas, According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), many female veterans face challenges when returning to civilian life that are different than their male counterparts; and

Whereas, According to the VA, those challenges include raising children on their own or dealing with the psychological after-effects of military sexual trauma (MST); and

Whereas, The VA also states that facing these challenges without intervention can put female veterans at greater risk of becoming homeless; and

Whereas, According to the National Coalition For Homeless Veterans (NCFHV), women currently comprise 8% of the total veteran population and 14.6% of the active duty military; and

Whereas, According to NCFHV, the percentage of women on active duty military is estimated to increase from 14.6% to 16% by 2035; and

Whereas, According to the United States Government Accountability Office's (GAO) latest study in 2011, the number of female veterans identified as homeless by the VA has increased by more than 140%, from 1,350 in fiscal year 2006 to 3,328 in fiscal year 2010; and

Whereas, The actual number of homeless female veterans may be even greater, as the GAO admits to the limitations of its report, acknowledging that their sources for such information, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) "does not collect detailed information on homeless women veterans...[and]...

Neither VA nor HUD collect data on the total number of homeless women veterans in the general population"; and

Whereas, The GAO further notes that female veterans are also four times more likely than their male counterparts to end up homeless; and

Whereas, As cited in a November 10, 2013 article in The New York Daily News, according to the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS), the total number of veterans in the City's homeless population declined by 12% since 2012 - from 622 to 546 - but the number of homeless female veterans actually increased; and

Whereas, According to DHS data, as of September 2014, 425 single adults were temporarily housed in DHS veterans shelters, 22 of whom were single women; and

Whereas, According to Genevieve Chase of the advocacy group American Women Veterans, "[a] lot of homeless shelters for veterans do not accept women, much less women with children", and "they've just been falling through the cracks;" and

Whereas, Legislation is necessary to require a study to gather information on the number of homeless female veterans in New York and how many of them have children, while also tracking services provided to these children and veterans; and

Whereas, The study should also require that data be gathered regarding cases of MST experienced by homeless female veterans while on active duty or during military training; and

Whereas, In addition, the legislation should require that the study include recommendations to combat the growing problem of homelessness among women who have served our country; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation which would require the Division of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study regarding homeless female veterans in New York.

MB/ENB/ KK