



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 291-A

Resolution calling upon the Congress of the United States to approve S.50, the Veterans Health Care Guarantee Act, and H.R. 2318, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act, which would institute a mandatory funding mechanism for the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system.

By Council Members Monserrate, Barron, Foster, Gennaro, Gerson, Liu, Nelson, Sanders, Seabrook, Palma, James, Gentile and Sears

Whereas, According to the “Independent Budget - Fiscal Year 2005” (the “Independent Budget”), a publication that represents the collaborative efforts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (the “VFW”), Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America and AMVETS, federal funding for health care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (the “VA”) is discretionary, with funding levels determined through an annual appropriations bill process; and

Whereas, As a result of funding shortfalls with respect to this discretionary funding mechanism, the needs of our nation’s sick and disabled veterans are not being adequately addressed; and

Whereas, In an article entitled Mandatory Funding for Veterans Health Care, the VFW stated that the level of discretionary funding allocated to the VA health care system consistently falls short of VFW and Independent Budget recommendations, forcing the VA to add to the inadequate appropriation by requesting supplemental funding, which still does not approach proper funding levels; and

Whereas, The President’s own Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation’s Veterans recognized that even if the VA was operating at maximum efficiency, it would not have the capacity to meet its obligations to enrolled veterans with its current level of funding; and

Whereas, The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform, an umbrella organization that represents nine of the nation’s most prominent veterans organizations, indicated in its pamphlet entitled Honor

American's Commitment to Veterans (the "Partnership Pamphlet"), its belief that the current discretionary funding method for veterans health care is broken; and

Whereas, According to the Partnership Pamphlet, the enrolled patient population in the VA health care system has surged from 2.9 million in 1996 to 6.8 million in 2003, a 134 percent increase, while monies appropriated by the federal government and earmarked to be received by the VA health care system have only increased 44 percent during the same time period; and

Whereas, According to the Partnership Pamphlet, as a direct result of the unreliable and insufficient discretionary funding mechanism, the VA has been forced to ration care by denying services to veterans and by curtailing needed medical treatment; and

Whereas, According to South Dakota Senator Tim Johnson, as a direct result of the current discretionary funding systems shortfalls, there were as many as 300,000 veterans waiting for appointments at VA hospitals; and

Whereas, Because of these funding shortfalls, the VA has also been unable to modernize a number of its facilities and cannot purchase sufficient state of the art medical equipment; and

Whereas, The Veterans Health Care Guarantee Act, Senate Bill 50, introduced by Senator Johnson, and the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act, House Bill 2318, introduced by Congressman Lane Evans, would provide an assured and adequate level of funding for veterans health care; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Congress of the United States to approve S.50, the Veterans Health Care Guarantee Act, and H.R. 2318, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act, which would institute a mandatory funding mechanism for the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system.

