



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0958-2011, **Version:** *

Res. No. 958

Resolution urging the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 930, a bill to amend Title 38 of the United States Code to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder or mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

By Council Members Lappin, Brewer, Chin, Dromm, Gentile, Koslowitz, Lander, Williams, Rodriguez, Eugene, Koppell, Mark-Viverito, Vann, Arroyo, Levin, Rose, Barron, Crowley, Jackson, Mealy, Sanders Jr., Koo, Ulrich and Halloran

Whereas, New York City's five boroughs are home to approximately 225,370 veterans, 204,800 of which are male (91%) and 20,460 female (9%); and

Whereas, The veteran population in New York City spans the generations with the number of veterans between the age of 45 and 64 at approximately 89,590 (40%), and the number of veterans between the age of 17 and 44 at approximately 80,800 (36%); and

Whereas, The New York City veteran population is expected to grow with the pending military decrease of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that about 11-20% of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars (Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom), about 10% of Gulf War (Desert Storm) veterans, and about 30% of Vietnam veterans suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); and

Whereas, Studies have shown a strong link between military sexual trauma (MST) and PTSD; and

Whereas, The Department of Veterans Affairs' National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder examined veterans who received VA services after returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan and found that of the 125,729 veterans who received VA primary care or mental health services, 15.1% of the women and 0.7% of the men reported MST when screened; and

Whereas, The Pentagon has estimated that only 10% of all military sexual assaults are reported; and

Whereas, The Department of Defense identified 3,158 official reports of sexual assault in the military in 2010; and

Whereas, Prior to June 2010, in order to receive service-connected benefits and care from the VA for PTSD, veterans were required to show a diagnosis by providing proof of time in a combat area and that a traumatic event happened during their time; and

Whereas, Many veterans faced significant burdens in locating nonexistent documentation of traumatic events resulting in denial of health care; and

Whereas, In June 2010, Congress passed a law reducing the burden of proof so that a veteran need only provide a medical opinion that the claimed stressor is consistent with the circumstances of the veteran's service; and

Whereas, Some members of Congress assert that the changes in 2010 did not apply to veterans who filed mental health claims based on sexual assault or harassment; and

Whereas, H.R. 930 would grant MST victims an opportunity for disability compensation by reducing the burden of proof to allow a diagnosis by a mental health professional of a mental health condition, defined as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, or other mental health conditions as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, together with written testimony by the veteran of such trauma alleged to have been incurred during the veteran's service and a written determination by the professional that such mental health condition is related; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 930, a bill to amend Title 38 of the United States Code to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder or mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

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