

A RESOLUTION

To urge the U.S. Congress to support the provision of prompt and comprehensive mental health treatment to military personnel and veterans who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other service-related stress disorders.

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Ohio:

WHEREAS, According to the National Institutes of Health, the most common mental health problems faced by returning troops are, in order, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance use disorder, anxiety disorder, and serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder; and

WHEREAS, The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were the longest combat operations since Vietnam, and the stress of being in a war zone or long-term naval deployment combined with the stress of being away from home for long periods of time can increase the chance of having PTSD or other mental health problems; and

WHEREAS, According to research conducted at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, 30,177 active duty personnel and veterans who served in the military after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks have died by suicide compared to the 7,057 service members killed in combat in those same 20 years; and

WHEREAS, According to the United Service Organizations, Inc., suicide rates among active-duty military members in 2021 were at an all-time high since recordkeeping began after September 11, 2001, and had been increasing over the previous five years at an alarmingly steady pace; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Department of Defense, and many other entities are working to identify and address the issues of veterans and military personnel suffering from PTSD and other service-related stress disorders; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has established the National Center for PTSD as a center of excellence for research and education on the prevention, understanding, and treatment of PTSD; and

WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, each medical center within the Department has PTSD specialists who provide treatment for veterans with PTSD; and

WHEREAS, Mental trauma may not be as easily identifiable as the physical trauma suffered by military personnel and veterans, and may require additional resources to identify and treat; and

WHEREAS, Only qualified and licensed medical professionals with experience treating military personnel and veterans should have the authority to approve or disapprove mental health treatment of military personnel and veterans experiencing service-related stress disorders; and

WHEREAS, While support and treatment programs are available to veterans and military personnel suffering from PTSD or other service-related stress disorders, there are many service members who are still not receiving sufficient treatment; and

WHEREAS, Several recommendations made by the U.S. Government Accountability Office to

the U.S. Department of Defense have not yet been fully implemented to ensure that PTSD and traumatic brain injuries are appropriately considered prior to separating certain service members from the military for misconduct, thereby placing both the earned benefits due to veterans and the mental health of some service members and veterans in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, The service members who willingly sacrifice their safety for the freedom of all Americans deserve to have access to all the resources and support services necessary for them to reintegrate into society; and

WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable may qualify for VA health care benefits including qualifying Reserve and National Guard members; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the Ohio Senate of the 136th General Assembly, urge the United States Congress to support the provision of prompt and comprehensive mental health diagnosis and treatment to all military personnel and veterans who are suffering from PTSD and other service-related stress disorders; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each of the U.S. Government Accountability Office's recommendations is implemented to guarantee that PTSD and traumatic brain injuries are appropriately considered prior to separating certain service members from the military for misconduct; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we believe military personnel and veterans who had separation or discharge from military service related to mental health issues should have consideration to correct records to a more honorable discharge; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm that post-military service civilian income should not have any bearing on eligibility for healthcare-related benefits or treatment; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit duly authenticated copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Speaker and Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore and Secretary of the U.S. Senate, the members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of Ohio.

President _____ of the Senate.

Adopted _____, 20____