

As Introduced

**135th General Assembly
Regular Session
2023-2024**

S. C. R. No. 9

Senator Schaffer

Cosponsors: Senators Hoagland, Wilkin, Romanchuk, Cirino, Ingram

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge the U.S. Congress to support the provision of 1
prompt and comprehensive mental health treatment to 2
military personnel and veterans who are suffering from 3
post-traumatic stress disorder and other service- 4
related stress disorders. 5

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF OHIO (THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING):

WHEREAS, According to the National Institutes of Health, 6
the most common mental health problems faced by returning troops 7
are, in order, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder 8
(PTSD), substance use disorder, anxiety disorder, and serious 9
mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder; and 10

WHEREAS, The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were the longest 11
combat operations since Vietnam, and the stress of being in a 12
war zone or long-term naval deployment combined with the stress 13
of being away from home for long periods of time can increase 14
the chance of having PTSD or other mental health problems; and 15

WHEREAS, According to research conducted at Brown 16
University's Watson Institute for International and Public 17
Affairs, 30,177 active duty personnel and veterans who served in 18
the military after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks 19

have died by suicide compared to the 7,057 service members 20
killed in combat in those same 20 years; and 21

WHEREAS, According to the United Service Organizations, 22
Inc., suicide rates among active-duty military members in 2021 23
were at an all-time high since recordkeeping began after 24
September 11, 2001, and had been increasing over the previous 25
five years at an alarmingly steady pace; and 26

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. 27
Department of Defense, and many other entities are working to 28
identify and address the issues of veterans and military 29
personnel suffering from PTSD and other service-related stress 30
disorders; and 31

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs 32
has established the National Center for PTSD as a center of 33
excellence for research and education on the prevention, 34
understanding, and treatment of PTSD; and 35

WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Department of Veterans 36
Affairs, each medical center within the Department has PTSD 37
specialists who provide treatment for veterans with PTSD; and 38

WHEREAS, Mental trauma may not be as easily identifiable as 39
the physical trauma suffered by military personnel and veterans, 40
and may require additional resources to identify and treat; and 41

WHEREAS, Only qualified and licensed medical professionals 42
with experience treating military personnel and veterans should 43
have the authority to approve or disapprove mental health 44
treatment of military personnel and veterans experiencing 45
service-related stress disorders; and 46

WHEREAS, While support and treatment programs are available 47
to veterans and military personnel suffering from PTSD or other 48
service-related stress disorders, there are many service members 49
who are still not receiving sufficient treatment; and 50

WHEREAS, Several recommendations made by the U.S. 51
Government Accountability Office to the U.S. Department of 52
Defense have not yet been fully implemented to ensure that PTSD 53
and traumatic brain injuries are appropriately considered prior 54
to separating certain service members from the military for 55
misconduct, thereby placing both the earned benefits due to 56
veterans and the mental health of some service members and 57
veterans in jeopardy; and 58

WHEREAS, The service members who willingly sacrifice their 59
safety for the freedom of all Americans deserve to have access 60
to all the resources and support services necessary for them to 61
reintegrate into society; and 62

WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Department of Veterans 63
Affairs, a person who served in the active military, naval, or 64
air service and who was discharged or released under conditions 65
other than dishonorable may qualify for VA health care benefits 66
including qualifying Reserve and National Guard members; now 67
therefore be it 68

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the 135th General 69
Assembly of the State of Ohio, urge the United States Congress 70
to support the provision of prompt and comprehensive mental 71
health diagnosis and treatment to all military personnel and 72
veterans who are suffering from PTSD and other service-related 73
stress disorders; and be it further 74

RESOLVED, That we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to 75
ensure that each of the U.S. Government Accountability Office's 76
recommendations is implemented to guarantee that PTSD and 77
traumatic brain injuries are appropriately considered prior to 78
separating certain service members from the military for 79
misconduct; and be it further 80

RESOLVED, That we believe military personnel and veterans 81

who had separation or discharge from military service related to 82
mental health issues should have consideration to correct 83
records to a more honorable discharge; and be it further 84

RESOLVED, That we affirm that post-military service 85
civilian income should not have any bearing on eligibility for 86
healthcare-related benefits or treatment; and be it further 87

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit duly 88
authenticated copies of this resolution to the President of the 89
United States, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Speaker 90
and Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the President 91
Pro Tempore and Secretary of the U.S. Senate, the members of the 92
Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of Ohio. 93