

Reps. Polidori, Valentine, Wojno, Kathleen Law, Spade, LeBlanc, Constan, Griffin, Gonzales, Byrnes, Angerer, Brown, Espinoza, Gillard, Garfield, Marleau, Rick Jones, Farrah, Bennett, Young, Miller, Vagnozzi, Sak, Hood, Scott, Bieda, Clack, Dean, Johnson, Meisner, Meadows, Rocca, Leland, Accavitti, Cushingberry, Emmons, Hammel, Hammon, Hansen, Lemmons, Mayes, Melton, Nofs, Pastor, Proos, Stahl and Tobocman offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 175.

A resolution to memorialize the United States Congress to reestablish medical care for certain veterans whose income and disability status disqualified them for Department of Veterans Affairs medical care as of January 17, 2003.

Whereas, We have been at war for nearly six years since the September 11th terrorist attacks on our soil. During this time, American military personnel have served around the world in combat. The wounds and illnesses that they may endure as the result of this service in our defense could affect them for a lifetime. It is our responsibility as a nation to honor their service and sacrifice by doing all we can to restore their health and opportunities in civilian life; and

Whereas, Beginning January 17, 2003, veterans with income above certain levels and who have no service-connected disability have been ineligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical care. These Priority 8 category veterans may lack other sources of health care, and so ineligibility for VA health care could be a threat to their long-term health. Even veterans without evident war-related injuries or illnesses could have hidden health issues that can evolve into serious problems. Infections or viruses from serving in foreign lands might not reveal themselves until later in life. In addition, veterans with combat wounds such as traumatic brain injury (TBI) from blast effects or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may not display symptoms for years. Without early access to the VA healthcare system, veterans may not have the benefits of medical monitoring and early intervention in developing health issues; and

Whereas, Congress has before it two bills that would restore VA eligibility to these Priority 8 veterans under current standards with income levels too high and no service-connected disability. In the House of Representatives, HR 463 would restore this eligibility, while in the Senate, S 1147 has been introduced. We owe it to our veterans to act on this legislation to ensure that any long-term problems that may not be currently evident can be identified and treated in a timely manner. Providing quality health care is part of our duty as a nation to our veterans, and there is no excuse for failing to right this mistake; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the United States Congress to reestablish medical care for certain veterans whose income and disability status disqualified them for Department of Veterans Affairs medical care as of January 17, 2003; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.