

Reps. Smiley, Darany, Barnett, Bauer, Damrow, Dillon, Heise, Huuki, Kowall, Kurtz, LeBlanc, Lindberg, Liss, Potvin, Santana, Slavens and Tyler offered the following resolution:

Substitute for House Resolution No. 89

A resolution to urge the Department of Defense to continue to apply uniform standards for awarding the Purple Heart, to ensure appropriate acknowledgement of our military personnel who sustain traumatic brain injuries.

Whereas, With origins that date back to George Washington, the Purple Heart medal is a highly respected expression of our nation's gratitude for the members of our military who are wounded in battle. Its recipients reflect the intimate and lasting sacrifices that so many brave men and women make to preserve the freedoms and way of life Americans cherish; and

Whereas, For many years, the eligibility criteria for the Purple Heart have been interpreted to be injuries that are visible and tangible in nature. As a result, a stigma seems to have developed about traumatic brain injuries, which at times have been called "invisible wounds." In recent years, as we have come to understand more fully the true impact of such injuries, concussions and all degrees of traumatic brain injuries are finally being acknowledged as serious threats to health. In addition, the widespread use of improvised explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan and the quality of equipment used and emergency care offered have contributed to a significant number of personnel surviving traumatic brain injuries; and

Whereas, The branches of our military have taken steps to recognize the seriousness of traumatic brain injuries by revamping approaches to awarding the Purple Heart. The Army very recently set new guidelines to be followed, and the other branches have been examining their practices. We want to thank the Department of Defense for their efforts in moving forward with redefinitions of the criteria for awarding the Purple Heart and thanking them for this progress; and

Whereas, The Department of Defense is to be commended for its work on the issue of traumatic brain injuries to our troops and the steps it has taken to address situations involving complex medical details in an effective and responsible manner; and

Whereas, Given the heroism displayed each day in mountains and deserts far from our shores by brave men and women working to defend our nation and its ideals, it is imperative that this nation acknowledges the sacrifices our troops make for us. By valuing the heroism of all of those who are injured, we express our lasting respect for those who suffer on our behalf; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the Department of Defense to continue to apply uniform standards for awarding the Purple Heart, to ensure appropriate acknowledgement of our military personnel who sustain traumatic brain injuries; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of the Department of Defense.