

SR-99, As Adopted by Senate, December 13, 2007

Senators Richardville, Allen, Birkholz, Garcia, Pappageorge, Kahn, Hardiman, Jelinek, Gilbert, Van Woerkom, Patterson, Cropsey, McManus, Cassis, Kuipers, Jansen, Olshove, Jacobs, Stamas, Brown, Cherry, Barcia, Switalski, Gleason, Whitmer, Sanborn and Bishop offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 99.

A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to ensure that all members of the Armed Forces receive post-deployment health assessments for possible post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries, and that these assessments follow these servicemembers as they transition from active duty to civilian life or reserve duty.

Whereas, The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are creating new medical needs for our veterans of these campaigns. Repeated deployments for many members of the Armed Forces are testing their ability to endure the stress of combat. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a potential result of prolonged combat, has been recognized since our Civil War. This disorder is a type of combat wound that may not be apparent initially or may not manifest itself until years later. Ensuring that post-deployment health assessments are conducted and processed that demonstrate a veteran was exposed to conditions that could have caused PTSD could be crucial to getting a veteran the health care needed years or decades later; and

Whereas, Roadside bombs are the weapon of choice for our enemies which are causing wounds being called the signature injury of combat in Iraq, and to a lesser extent, Afghanistan. Constantly improving body armor and rapid access to high quality medical care have resulted in far more servicemembers surviving their wounds than in past wars. But surviving these blasts has come at the price of an often hidden wound known as traumatic brain injuries (TBI). These soft-tissue injuries may take years to become a visible problem. Worse, the physical injuries of TBI may often be misdiagnosed as PTSD. The resulting counseling and other treatments that may be ordered will be inappropriate for a physical injury. Recognizing TBI is essential to receiving appropriate care; and

Whereas, Heavy use of our reserve component forces of the National Guard and Reserves is also challenging the various bureaucracies as servicemembers are activated and sent overseas and then sent back to their reserve units or discharged into civilian life. Paperwork must cross from one responsible bureaucracy to another, as servicemembers fall under different organizations. Since PTSD and TBI are afflictions that may need to be treated for the lifetime of a veteran, our system must be robust enough to follow veterans for decades in the future to ensure that our veterans receive effective and timely care; and

Whereas, The Department of Defense (DOD) should make sure that all servicemembers who have been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and other overseas combat assignments are screened to identify potential PTSD and TBI. The DOD needs to make sure that case management for servicemembers returning from overseas duty is seamless so that records are properly transitioned from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The DOD must make sure that servicemember records are accessible to other organizations charged with a veteran's health care needs. The VA must also monitor and support post-deployment health care needs of National Guard and Reserve military personnel to ensure that they are scheduled for needed care and enrolled in the VA health system. Our duty to our veterans does not end when they hang up their uniforms. With injuries that can follow years or decades after military service, our health care assessment and response must be equal to that challenge; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to ensure that all members of the Armed Forces receive post-deployment health assessments for possible post-

traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries, and that these assessments follow these servicemembers as they transition from active duty to civilian life or reserve duty; 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.