

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

**Senate Resolution No. 98.**

A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact legislation to increase funding for Veterans Affairs health claims processing.

Whereas, The medical care provided to our wounded and sick veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is of the highest quality. The medical staff is committed to our veterans, and we are thankful for their efforts. But this level of care means little to our wounded and sick veterans who have defended us overseas when the federal government has insufficiently funded the staffs needed to get our wounded and sick veterans into the VA health care system where our veterans can benefit from the services they are entitled to receive; and

Whereas, Despite being at war in Iraq for four years and in Afghanistan for more than five years, the federal government has not expanded the claims processing system and staff to handle the number of wounded and sick military personnel discharged from the military and eligible to be cared for in the VA health system. Getting the benefits that our VA can provide our veterans is dependent on evaluating and processing each veteran to rate them for their injuries or illness; and

Whereas, A number of steps should be taken to expedite the process of a veteran claiming benefits and the VA rating that veteran to determine the level of support available to the veteran. When a claim is received by the VA, the claim is analyzed and processed through a succession of steps that require personnel to gather supporting records and documentation or make decisions about the veteran and the claim. Adding clerical staff to expedite the processing and make sure supporting records and documents are quickly retrieved would avoid months of potential delay. Modernizing the record storage and handling systems could eliminate the problem of lost or delayed documentation. Hiring and training more rating specialists would further speed up the process as would ensuring that patient advocates are available in sufficient numbers to guide veterans through the process and help them overcome obstacles; and

Whereas, Congress must be united in improving the efficiency of the claims process from the time a claim is received to the point when a veteran is receiving the care he or she needs. Funding proper staffing levels to end the often lengthy wait our discharged military personnel in need of medical care now face before getting the care they need must be a priority; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact legislation to increase funding for Veterans Affairs health claims processing; 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.