

Rep. Albert offered the following concurrent resolution:

House Concurrent Resolution No. 3.

A concurrent resolution to urge the Congress of the United States to properly fund the Department of Veterans Affairs Board of Veterans' Appeals and to urge the Board to streamline its process so that appeals are decided in a more timely manner.

Whereas, Military veterans have a number of benefits available to them when honorably discharged from service. However, to receive disability benefits, veterans must apply and be approved by agents at local veterans affairs offices. If denied, the veteran has a right to appeal to the federal Board of Veterans' Appeals; and

Whereas, As of July 2016, more than 81,000 cases were pending before the Board of Veterans' Appeals, and veterans are waiting an average of five years for cases to be determined. The wait time for a case to be resolved is unacceptable to the men and women who have served our country, and action must be taken to ensure that they are able to access the benefits they have earned; and

Whereas, Additional funding and staff are necessary to properly address the backlog, as well as the estimated 57,000 new complaints received in 2016. Streamlining the complex appeals process is also required. Increased funding for the board was included in H.R. 2577 of 2015. However, the bill did not pass the U.S. Senate before the congressional session ended. Legislation is pending in the 115th Congress (H.R. 457) to require changes to the appeals process to address the backlog of appeals; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That we urge the Congress of the United States to properly fund the Department of Veterans Affairs Board of Veterans' Appeals and to urge the Board to streamline its process so that appeals are decided in a more timely manner; 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, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals.