

# State of Vermont

## House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

### Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 22

Joint resolution supporting the merger of the Vermont Veterans' Home into the U.S. Veterans Health Administration beginning in federal fiscal year 2018

Offered by: Representatives Berry of Manchester, Ancel of Calais, Bartholomew of Hartland, Botzow of Pownal, Branagan of Georgia, Briglin of Thetford, Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Clarkson of Woodstock, Cole of Burlington, Connor of Fairfield, Conquest of Newbury, Corcoran of Bennington, Dakin of Chester, Dakin of Colchester, Dame of Essex, Deen of Westminster, Donovan of Burlington, Evans of Essex, Forguites of Springfield, French of Randolph, Higley of Lowell, Jewett of Ripton, Keenan of St. Albans City, Klein of East Montpelier, Krowinski of Burlington, LaLonde of South Burlington, Long of Newfane, Macaig of Williston, Martin of Wolcott, Masland of Thetford, McCullough of Williston, McFaun of Barre Town, Miller of Shaftsbury, Morris of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nuovo of Middlebury, O'Sullivan of Burlington, Partridge of Windham, Patt of Worcester, Russell of Rutland City, Ryerson of Randolph, Sharpe of Bristol, Sheldon of Middlebury, Stevens of Waterbury, Sullivan of Burlington, Sweaney of Windsor, Till of Jericho, Toll of Danville, Townsend of South Burlington, Troiano of Stannard, Walz of Barre City, Yantachka of Charlotte, Young of Glover, and Zagar of Barnard

Whereas, in 1884, the General Assembly adopted 1884 Acts and Resolves No. 180, An act incorporating the Trustees of the Soldiers' Home of Vermont, and

Whereas, in 1971, the General Assembly changed the name of the Vermont Soldiers' Home to the Vermont Veterans' Home, and

Whereas, in 2004, the General Assembly revised comprehensively State law relating to the Home and designated it "a body corporate and politic and a public instrumentality of the State," and

Whereas, the current mission of the Home is "to provide a healthcare community for U.S. military veterans, their spouses and Gold Star parents in an environment that allows residents to achieve their self-determined quality of life," and

Whereas, in fiscal year 2016, the State spent \$5,894,000.00 of State funds on the Home, or 28 percent of the Home's overall budget, with the balance coming from commercial insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, and private funds, and

Whereas, although close collaborators, the Veterans Health Administration (the Administration), a unit of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Home are separate organizations, under federal and State jurisdiction respectively, and

Whereas, the Home is not organized as an official State veterans' home, as are the veterans' homes in all other states, but the Home's mission is similar to that of these comparable health care institutions, and

Whereas, the General Assembly's continuing concerns about the operations and funding of the Home led to a recently released legislative study on this topic, and

Whereas, the merging of the Home into the Administration, effective beginning in federal fiscal year 2018, may prove the best alternative and could establish a nationwide model for the future governance of the nation's veterans' homes, and

Whereas, a merger requires both federal and State statutory and regulatory changes, and, if the proposed target date is to be met, the federal changes should begin in 2016, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly requests that the Vermont Congressional Delegation and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs start the necessary federal legislative and regulatory processes required for the Home to be merged into the Administration at the start of federal fiscal year 2018, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.