

No. R-425. Joint resolution honoring women veterans and requesting that state and federal officials work cooperatively to assure that women veterans receive the recognition, the health care services and other support services they need and deserve.

(J.R.S.60)

By All Members of the Senate,

Whereas, March is Women's History Month, and

Whereas, women have served honorably and with courage in all of America's wars and conflicts since the American Revolution, and

Whereas, the United States military has evolved from a predominantly male force to a force of over 14 percent women who are currently serving on active duty and nearly 17 percent serving in the Reserves and National Guard, and

Whereas, the number of women veterans is expected to be nearly two million by 2020 and will constitute more than 10 percent of the veteran population, and

Whereas, given that an unprecedented number of women are serving in the military and participating in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is working to provide consistent, comprehensive and high-quality health care and benefits to women veterans of all eras, and

Whereas, there is now a growing need to improve health care services for women veterans, to ensure clinicians are properly trained to provide primary care and gender-specific care to women of all ages, and to identify innovative courses of treatment and solutions to administrative obstacles that are unique to women veterans, and

Whereas, with a rapidly increasing number of women serving in the military today and returning from deployments as seasoned veterans, some with exposure to combat, VA facilities and veterans' service organizations are working to ensure that the

postdeployment mental and physical health needs unique to women veterans are also met, and

Whereas, women deserve to be acknowledged for their military service and treated with equal respect, not only during Women's History Month but throughout the year, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly encourages the Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs and its women veterans coordinator to work in conjunction with the National Foundation for Women Legislators, Inc. and the Center for Women Veterans at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, to reach out to all women veterans in Vermont and to encourage them to bring their specific needs and concerns to the attention of state and federal officials, so that state legislators and state and federal officials can work together to identify unique issues impacting women veterans and to consider policy solutions that will improve the quality of life for women veterans in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the General Assembly honors all of the women in this state who have heroically answered their call to duty and recognizes the important role women have played in shaping this great nation, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the director and to the women veterans coordinator at the Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs, the United States Veterans Health Administration's women veterans program manager in White River Junction, and the National Foundation of Women Legislators, Inc. in Washington, D.C.