

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 129 Session of 2021

INTRODUCED BY PENNYCUICK, FARRY, DeLISSIO, RYAN, POLINCHOCK, HILL-EVANS, ISAACSON, GUENST, COOK, HAMM, N. NELSON, SCHLEGEL CULVER, HOHENSTEIN, SOLOMON, MIZGORSKI, McNEILL, WEBSTER, R. BROWN, INNAMORATO, CIRESI, SAINATO, GILLEN AND C. WILLIAMS, AUGUST 5, 2021

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, JANUARY 24, 2022

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Establishing the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care in <--
2 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania WITHIN THE JOINT STATE <--
3 GOVERNMENT COMMISSION.

4 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of
5 Veterans Affairs, the projected veteran population nationwide is
6 18,000,000, with women making up an estimated 8% of that
7 population; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States Census Bureau estimates the
9 percentage of female veterans between 2010 and 2040 will
10 increase from 9% in 2010 to 17% in 2040; and

11 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of
12 Veterans Affairs, as of September 2018, this Commonwealth was
13 home to approximately 836,000 veterans, including 615,000
14 wartime veterans from World War II through the Gulf War; and

15 WHEREAS, Females comprise approximately 46,000 60,000 of the <--
16 wartime veterans; and

1 WHEREAS, The number of women veterans will increase with the  
2 end of Operation Iraqi Freedom ~~and Operation Enduring Freedom,~~ <--  
3 OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM AND THE REMOVAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
4 ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL FROM AFGHANISTAN; and

5 WHEREAS, Women veterans often face unique challenges in  
6 transitioning from active duty to civilian life; and

7 WHEREAS, The challenging needs facing women veterans can  
8 often be overlooked when providing services to a large veteran  
9 population; and

10 WHEREAS, Ensuring the availability of specialized services  
11 for physical ~~and mental health, including~~ HEALTH, SUCH AS <--  
12 OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGICAL CARE, CANCER SCREENINGS, FAMILY  
13 PLANNING AND INFERTILITY TREATMENTS, AS WELL AS MENTAL HEALTH,  
14 INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, treatment of post-traumatic  
15 stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma  
16 and alcohol and substance abuse, tailored to the specific needs  
17 of women veterans is essential to ensure that our returning  
18 ~~veterans receive proper~~ WOMEN VETERANS RECEIVE PROPER AND <--  
19 ADEQUATE care; and

20 WHEREAS, Establishing a task force to study the issues facing  
21 women veterans and to make recommendations to the Governor and  
22 the General Assembly will provide much-needed information and  
23 insight from those who address the issues on a daily basis;  
24 therefore be it

25 RESOLVED (the Senate concurring), That the General Assembly  
26 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania DIRECT THE JOINT STATE <--  
27 GOVERNMENT COMMISSION TO establish the Task Force on Women  
28 Veterans' Health Care; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
30 consist of ~~17 members who shall be appointed as follows within~~ <--

1 ~~25 days after the adoption of this resolution by both chambers:~~

2 ~~(1) Two members of the Senate, one appointed by the~~  
3 ~~President pro tempore and one appointed by the Minority~~  
4 ~~Leader of the Senate.~~

5 ~~(2) Two members of the House of Representatives, one~~  
6 ~~appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and~~  
7 ~~one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of~~  
8 ~~Representatives.~~

9 ~~(3) Thirteen members appointed by the Governor as~~  
10 ~~follows:~~

11 ~~(i) the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs~~  
12 ~~of the Pennsylvania National Guard;~~

13 ~~(ii) the Secretary of Health;~~

14 ~~(iii) the Secretary of Human Services;~~

15 ~~(iv) the Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs;~~

16 ~~(v) four women veterans who are residents of this~~  
17 ~~Commonwealth;~~

18 ~~(vi) a representative from THE CHAIR OF THE STATE <--~~  
19 ~~VETERANS' COMMISSION AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM:~~

20 (1) the health care provider community in this  
21 Commonwealth who has experience in providing health care  
22 to returning women veterans;

23 ~~(vii) a representative from (2) the Commonwealth's <--~~  
24 ~~mental health care provider community with experience in~~  
25 ~~providing mental health care treatment to returning women~~  
26 ~~veterans;~~

27 ~~(viii) a representative from (3) the Commonwealth's <--~~  
28 ~~substance abuse and addiction treatment provider~~  
29 ~~community with experience in providing substance abuse~~  
30 ~~and addiction treatment to returning women veterans;~~

1           ~~(ix) a representative from~~ (4) a Commonwealth           <--  
2           advocacy group that represents the interests of sexual  
3           assault victims with experience in providing services to  
4           women veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma,  
5           including harassment or abuse; AND   <--  
6           ~~(x) a representative from a county veteran's court;~~ <--  
7           and  
8           ~~(xi) the chairman of the State Veterans' Commission;~~  
9           ~~and be it further~~  
10           (5) A COUNTY VETERAN'S COURT;   <--  
11           AND BE IT FURTHER  
12           RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
13           study the health care needs of women veterans, including, BUT   <--  
14           NOT LIMITED TO:  
15           (1) quality of and access to mental health services,  
16           including services and treatment for post-traumatic stress  
17           disorder ~~and traumatic brain injury~~, TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY   <--  
18           AND MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA;  
19           (2) in-patient treatment availability;  
20           (3) adequacy and availability of appropriate women  
21           veterans' health care within the Federal VETERANS AFFAIRS   <--  
22           health care system and this Commonwealth, AS WELL AS THE   <--  
23           INTERACTION AND RECOGNITION OF THE NEEDS OF WOMEN VETERANS BY  
24           PRIVATE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS; and  
25           (4) adequacy, quality of and access to services  
26           providing for the identification and treatment of military  
27           sexual trauma, including sexual harassment or abuse;  
28           and be it further  
29           RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
30           identify other needs relating to the provisions of women

1 veterans' health care services ~~and make recommendations to the~~ <--  
2 ~~General Assembly and the Governor to address those needs;~~ and be  
3 it further

4 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care, <--  
5 WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION,  
6 consult with Federal, State and local entities ~~in completing the~~ <--  
7 ~~study, including,~~ INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO: <--

8 (1) The Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation.

9 (2) The United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

10 (3) The County Commissioners Association of  
11 Pennsylvania.

12 (4) The Pennsylvania Municipal League.

13 (5) The Pennsylvania Medical Society.

14 (6) The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of  
15 Pennsylvania.

16 (7) Veterans organizations or other organizations or  
17 associations that advocate for women veterans. <--

18 (8) ANY INDIVIDUAL THE TASK FORCE IDENTIFIES AS HAVING  
19 RELEVANT, SALIENT AND TIMELY EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE VETERANS  
20 AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM FOR WOMEN IN PENNSYLVANIA;

21 and be it further

22 ~~RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care~~ <--  
23 ~~elect one of its members to serve as chairperson;~~ and be it  
24 ~~further~~

25 ~~RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care~~  
26 ~~conduct its business as follows:~~

27 ~~(1) The physical presence of nine members constitutes a~~  
28 ~~quorum of the task force.~~

29 ~~(2) Action of the task force shall be authorized or~~  
30 ~~ratified by a majority vote of its members.~~

1 ~~(3) A member not physically present may participate by~~  
2 ~~teleconference or video conference.~~

3 ~~(4) The following shall apply:~~

4 ~~(i) The task force shall meet as necessary, but no~~  
5 ~~fewer than five times prior to September 30, 2022.~~

6 ~~Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson as~~  
7 ~~necessary.~~

8 ~~(ii) The chairperson shall schedule a meeting upon~~  
9 ~~written request of eight members of the task force.~~

10 ~~(iii) The first meeting shall be convened within 45~~  
11 ~~days of the adoption of this resolution by both chambers~~  
12 ~~at a time and place established by the Governor.~~

13 ~~(iv) The task force shall hold public hearings as~~  
14 ~~necessary to obtain the information required to conduct~~  
15 ~~its review.~~

16 ~~(v) Members may not receive compensation but shall~~  
17 ~~be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses~~  
18 ~~incurred in service of the task force;~~

19 ~~and be it further~~

20 ~~RESOLVED, That the Department of Health and the Department of~~  
21 ~~Military and Veterans Affairs provide staff support to the task~~  
22 ~~force; and be it further~~

23 ~~RESOLVED, That, upon request of the Task Force on Women~~  
24 ~~Veterans' Health Care, a State agency assist the task force in~~  
25 ~~the completion of its duties, including, to the extent permitted~~  
26 ~~by law relating to confidentiality, furnishing information and~~  
27 ~~advice to members of the task force necessary to perform their~~  
28 ~~duties; and be it further~~

29 ~~RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care~~  
30 ~~have the following powers:~~

1           ~~(1) To examine and analyze the current delivery of~~  
2 ~~health care services to women veterans at the Federal and~~  
3 ~~State level.~~

4           ~~(2) To review and analyze law, procedures, practices and~~  
5 ~~rules relating to delivery of health care services to women~~  
6 ~~veterans.~~

7           ~~(3) To hold public hearings for the taking of testimony~~  
8 ~~and the requesting of documents.~~

9           ~~(4) To administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses~~  
10 ~~appearing before the task force at the request of the~~  
11 ~~chairperson;~~

12 ~~and be it further~~

13       ~~RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care~~  
14 ~~have the following duties:~~ THAT THE JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT       <--  
15 COMMISSION:

16           ~~(1) To accept~~ ACCEPT and review written comments from       <--  
17 individuals and organizations.

18           ~~(2) To make, by September 30, 2022, a final report~~       <--  
19 REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY JUNE 30, 2023, to the       <--  
20 Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

21           ~~(3) To include~~ INCLUDE in the report under paragraph (2)       <--  
22 recommendations to:

23           (i) improve the delivery of health care services,       <--  
24 INCLUDING PREVENTATIVE, MAINTENANCE AND ACUTE CARE, AS  
25 WELL AS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES to women veterans; and

26           (ii) ~~implement~~ RECOMMEND necessary changes in State       <--  
27 statutes and practices, policies and procedures relating  
28 to the delivery of health care ~~services to women~~       <--  
29 ~~veterans.~~

30           ~~(4) To make reports as follows:~~

1           ~~(i) The task force may file status reports and~~  
2           ~~updates with the Governor, the Senate and the House of~~  
3           ~~Representatives as it deems appropriate.~~

4           ~~(ii) A report under this paragraph shall be adopted~~  
5           ~~at a public meeting.~~

6           ~~(iii) A report under this paragraph shall be a~~  
7           ~~public record under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6,~~  
8           ~~No.3), known as the Right to Know Law AND MENTAL HEALTH <--~~  
9           SERVICES TO WOMEN VETERANS;

10 and be it further

11         ~~RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care <--~~  
12         ~~expire October 31, 2022; and be it further~~

13         ~~RESOLVED, That a copy of A COPY OF THE REPORT REQUIRED UNDER <--~~  
14         this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United  
15         States, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, presiding officers of  
16         each house of Congress and each member of Congress from  
17         Pennsylvania.