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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 583 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY HELM, BARRAR, BERNSTINE, BOBACK, V. BROWN,  
CALTAGIRONE, CHARLTON, DRISCOLL, EVERETT, HAHN, JOZWIAK,  
W. KELLER, KORTZ, KRUEGER-BRANEKY, MACKENZIE, MENTZER,  
MILLARD, MURT, NEILSON, O'NEILL, PICKETT, RADER, READSHAW,  
SCHWEYER AND WARD, OCTOBER 26, 2017

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, OCTOBER 26, 2017

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A RESOLUTION

1 Beseeching the Congress of the United States and the Department  
2 of Veterans Affairs to consider authorizing the use of  
3 service dogs for veterans suffering from post-traumatic  
4 stress disorder or other emotional traumas.

5 WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates  
6 that 11% to 20% of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans are  
7 suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other  
8 emotional traumas; and

9 WHEREAS, Many veterans find it hard to trust anyone and  
10 therefore have difficulty going out in public to interact with  
11 others; and

12 WHEREAS, Combat veterans may resort to confining themselves  
13 in the home, which can lead to alcoholism, drug addiction or  
14 depression; and

15 WHEREAS, The VA pays for service dogs for veterans who suffer  
16 from physical disabilities such as impaired hearing, vision and  
17 mobility; and

1       WHEREAS, Current Federal regulation does not authorize the  
2 use of service dogs to assist in the healing of our wounded  
3 warriors suffering from emotional trauma; and

4       WHEREAS, The VA has been developing programs that help  
5 veterans and animals bond; and

6       WHEREAS, The VA has been working with nonprofit associations  
7 that specialize in equine-assisted therapy to help improve the  
8 quality of life for injured veterans and to help with the  
9 emotional and mental health of PTSD sufferers; and

10       WHEREAS, The VA and the National Institutes of Health  
11 continue to study the use of service dogs for individuals who  
12 have been diagnosed with PTSD; and

13       WHEREAS, Service dogs, psychiatric service dogs or emotional  
14 support dogs can help mitigate a veteran's disability; and

15       WHEREAS, As the greatest nation on earth, we should do  
16 everything we can to help our wounded veterans heal as quickly  
17 as possible; and

18       WHEREAS, Providing the best and most productive health care  
19 and therapy, including animal companions as a holistic approach  
20 for veterans suffering from PTSD, could help prevent veterans  
21 from needing extensive inpatient care or from hurting themselves  
22 and their families; therefore be it

23       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives beseech both the  
24 United States Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to  
25 strongly consider authorizing the use of service dogs for  
26 veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other  
27 emotional traumas suffered as a result of their dedication and  
28 service to their country; and be it further

29       RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to  
30 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to the presiding officers of

1 each house of Congress and to each member of Congress from  
2 Pennsylvania.