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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

SENATE RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE DISTRICT COURT'S STATE-WIDE
VETERANS' COURT

Introduced By: Senators Jabour, Cote, Bates, Pichardo, and Ottiano

Date Introduced: February 28, 2013

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1 WHEREAS, Since 2001, over two million American military personnel have been
2 deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan; and

3 WHEREAS, Rhode Island, along with the rest of the country, is witnessing the return of
4 our mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, and sons and daughters from the field of battle; and

5 WHEREAS, Rhode Island despite its small size, has borne a significant share of sacrifice
6 in these recent conflicts; and

7 WHEREAS, The call back to active duty status rate of our state's National Guard is the
8 second highest in the entire United States, with over 10,000 unit deployments; and

9 WHEREAS, The number of veterans living in Rhode Island who served in the Gulf Wars
10 is three times higher than the national per capita average, and is expected to grow as troops begin
11 to withdraw from Afghanistan; and

12 WHEREAS, The current estimate of service members, who within a year of leaving
13 combat will develop psychological and neurological injuries associated with post traumatic stress
14 disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI), dubbed the "signature injuries" of the Iraq War,
15 is between 10 and 30 percent; and

16 WHEREAS, A 2006 study illustrated the need in Rhode Island for trauma-related
17 services for veterans from the Gulf Wars (between 2,019 and 6,183 veterans in need) and other
18 wars (between 10,794 and 33,054 veterans in need); and

19 WHEREAS, "No Soldier Left Behind" is a code which Americans have always been

1 proud to support and live by; and

2 WHEREAS, We owe our returning soldiers a similar duty when they come home injured
3 or affected in a way that has altered who they are and what they do, especially if that injury
4 causes or fuels behavior that puts them into our criminal justice system; and

5 WHEREAS, These men and women have volunteered to put on a uniform and have
6 willingly followed our flag into potential harm's way. We now have a duty to assist these
7 individuals; and

8 WHEREAS, The first Veterans' Court in New England opened its doors for referrals in
9 the Rhode Island District Court in April of 2011, with dedicated resources and a specially
10 designated court calendar; and

11 WHEREAS, The Veterans' Court is a treatment court that requires dedication, hard work,
12 and motivation on the part of defendants, providing treatment programs which address the unique
13 challenges veterans face, while additionally providing them with the tools and insight needed to
14 become whole again, and ultimately reintegrate successfully into society; and

15 WHEREAS, This state has continually supported and funded alternatives to
16 incarceration, that stress treatment, rehabilitation, and personal responsibility while saving
17 taxpayers the cost of incarceration and additional crime due to recidivisms; and

18 WHEREAS, This Senate has previously resolved and urged the Congress of the United
19 States to pass legislation that would establish funding for individual states, including Rhode
20 Island, to implement recommendations from the President's Joining Forces Initiative that would
21 strengthen behavioral health care systems and supportive services for returning service members,
22 veterans, and their families; now, therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
24 hereby respectfully requests that the Congress of the United States authorize funding of the
25 SERVE ACT through the Office of National Drug Control Policy in order to further develop and
26 implement the District Court's Veteran's Treatment Court state-wide; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
28 transmit duly certified copies to the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation.

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