

Senate Joint Resolution No. 39

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 146

Senate Joint Resolution No. 39—Relative to health insurance for military retirees.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 28, 1998.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 39, M. Thompson. Health insurance for military retirees.

This measure would memorialize the Congress and the President to enact legislation that recognizes the importance that the United States government maintain its commitment to America's military retirees by providing lifetime health care for military retirees over the age of 65 years, legislation to require opening the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program to eligible uniformed services beneficiaries, and any other appropriate legislation that would address the concerns set forth in the measure.

WHEREAS, Military retirees who have served honorably for 20 or more years constitute a significant part of the aging population in the United States; and

WHEREAS, These retirees were encouraged to make the United States Armed Forces a career, in part by the promise of lifetime health care for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the age of 65 years, these retirees are provided health services by the United States Department of Defense's TRICARE Prime program, but those retirees who reach the age of 65 years lose a significant portion of the promised health care due to Medicare eligibility; and

WHEREAS, Many of these retirees are also unable to access military treatment facilities for health care and life maintenance medications because they live in areas where there are no military treatment facilities, or where these facilities have downsized so significantly that available space for care has become nonexistent; and

WHEREAS, The loss of access to health care services provided by the military has resulted in the government breaking its promise of lifetime health care; and

WHEREAS, Without continued affordable health care, including pharmaceuticals, these retirees have limited access to quality health care, and significantly less care than other retired federal civilians have under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP); and

WHEREAS, It is necessary to enact legislation that would restore health care benefits equitable with those of other retired federal workers; and

WHEREAS, Several proposals to meet this requirement are currently under consideration before the United States Congress, and the federal Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Of these proposals, the federal government has already begun to establish demonstration projects around the country to be conducted over the next three years, including one in California, which would allow Medicare to reimburse DoD for the costs of providing military retirees and their dependents health care. This project would allow a limited number of Medicare-eligible beneficiaries to enroll in DoD's TRICARE Prime program and receive all of their health care under that program; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature of the State of California calls upon the United States government to maintain its commitment to America's military retirees by providing lifetime health care for military retirees over the age of 65 years; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature respectfully memorializes the President and Congress of the United States to provide America's military retirees and their families with the health care they were promised, by enacting comprehensive legislation that affords military retirees the ability to access health care either through military treatment facilities or through the military's network of health care providers, as well as legislation to require opening the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) to those uniformed services beneficiaries who are eligible for Medicare, on the same basis and conditions that apply to retired federal civilian employees; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully memorializes the President and the Congress of the United States to enact any other appropriate legislation that would address the concerns set forth in this measure; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees on Aging, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

