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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AND ITS
DIVISION OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS TO STUDY VARIOUS PROGRAMS AIMED AT
INCREASING VETERANS' ACCESS TO SERVICES

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

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 rate of the state's own National Guard to active duty status is
8 the 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 fundamental freedoms enjoyed by all citizens of our state and these
13 United States are insured in no small part through the honorable service of our nation's military
14 veterans and,

15 WHEREAS, The people of the state have a deep debt of gratitude for the sacrifices made
16 by these men and women who as combat veterans placed their lives in harm's way to protect and
17 defend our nation from all foreign enemies and terrorist threats; and

18 WHEREAS, In order to ensure that these men and women upon returning to our state
19 may resume their education, personal growth, and career development throughout our state

1 without delay, Rhode Island's Division of Veterans' Affairs must deliver services in innovative
2 ways that not only meet, but exceed, the expectations of our veterans and their families; now
3 therefore be it

4 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
5 respectfully requests that the Department of Human Services and its Division of Veterans' Affairs
6 as part of its ongoing Veterans' Services Strategic Plan study implementing the following
7 recommendations so as to improve veterans' access to benefits:

8 1. Create a State "Veterans' Transition Team" composed of community and state agencies
9 involved in veterans services, to better coordinate, leverage, and ultimately improve services to
10 ease both short and long-term transitions for Rhode Island veterans, focusing particularly on
11 improving access to employment, healthcare, education, housing, and job training.

12 2. Designate a State Veterans' Ombudsperson within the Division, tasked with the overall
13 coordination of statewide services for veterans and authorized to facilitate rapid resolution of
14 issues faced by veterans.

15 3. Identify centrally located easily accessible "Veterans Benefits Coordination and
16 Outreach Counselors" to provide ongoing outreach to individual veterans to facilitate receipt of
17 needed and coordinated services.

18 4. Streamline the State Medicaid process for veterans who have applied for and received
19 Medicaid in other states, granting reciprocity, whenever possible.

20 5. Seek additional funding for a "Veteran's Benefits Pocket Guide" as well as a "Veterans'
21 Online Resource Application"; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
23 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Rhode Island Division of Veterans Affairs.

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