SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 528

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO 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,
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 MISSISSIPPI STATE
SENATE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That the
Legislature 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.

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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Legislature 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.

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 Mississippi in the Congress of the United States.