

---

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 324 Session of  
2015

---

INTRODUCED BY FARRY, DeLISSIO, SCHREIBER, ROZZI, FRANKEL, DAVIS,  
V. BROWN, HEFFLEY, STAATS, THOMAS, MURT, KILLION, YOUNGBLOOD,  
MILLARD, KINSEY, BAKER, McNEILL, HARHART, DONATUCCI, WARD,  
M. DALEY, SCHLOSSBERG, READSHAW, TOEPEL, CORBIN, ACOSTA,  
LEWIS, GOODMAN, D. COSTA, O'BRIEN, DeLUCA, COHEN, BROWNLEE,  
SIMS, DEAN, D. PARKER, SANTARSIERO AND PASHINSKI,  
MAY 28, 2015

---

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, MAY 28, 2015

---

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Establishing the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care.

2 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of  
3 Veterans Affairs, the projected veteran population nationwide is  
4 approximately 23,000,000 with women making up an estimated 10%  
5 of that population; and

6 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs  
7 estimates the percentage of female veterans between 2010 and  
8 2040 will increase from approximately 9% in 2010 to  
9 approximately 18% in 2040; and

10 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of  
11 Veterans Affairs, as of September 2012, this Commonwealth was  
12 home to approximately 981,000 veterans, including 719,000  
13 wartime veterans from World War II through the Gulf War; and

14 WHEREAS, Females comprise approximately 80,000 of the wartime

1 veterans; and

2 WHEREAS, The number of women veterans will increase with the  
3 end of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom;  
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Women veterans often face unique challenges in  
6 transitioning from active duty to civilian life; and

7 WHEREAS, The challenging needs facing women veterans can  
8 often be overlooked in providing services to such a large  
9 veteran population; and

10 WHEREAS, Ensuring the availability of specialized services  
11 for physical and mental health, including treatment of post-  
12 traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military  
13 sexual trauma and alcohol and substance abuse, tailored to the  
14 specific needs of women veterans is essential if the  
15 Commonwealth wants to ensure that our returning veterans receive  
16 proper care; and

17 WHEREAS, Establishing a task force to study the issues facing  
18 women veterans and to make recommendations to the Governor and  
19 the General Assembly will provide much-needed information and  
20 insight from those who address the issues on a daily basis;  
21 therefore be it

22 RESOLVED (the Senate concurring), That the Task Force on  
23 Women Veterans' Health Care be established; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
25 consist of 17 members who shall be appointed as follows within  
26 25 days after the adoption of this resolution by both chambers:

27 (1) Two members of the Senate, one appointed by the  
28 President pro tempore and one appointed by the Minority  
29 Leader of the Senate.

30 (2) Two members of the House of Representatives, one

1 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and  
2 one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of  
3 Representatives.

4 (3) Thirteen members appointed by the Governor as  
5 follows:

6 (i) the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs  
7 of the Pennsylvania National Guard;

8 (ii) the Secretary of Health;

9 (iii) the Secretary of Human Services;

10 (iv) the Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs;

11 (v) four women veterans who are residents of this  
12 Commonwealth;

13 (vi) a representative from the health care provider  
14 community in this Commonwealth who has experience in  
15 providing health care to returning women veterans;

16 (vii) a representative from the Commonwealth's  
17 mental health care provider community with experience in  
18 providing mental health care treatment to returning women  
19 veterans;

20 (viii) a representative from the Commonwealth's  
21 substance abuse and addiction treatment provider  
22 community with experience in providing substance abuse  
23 and addiction treatment to returning women veterans;

24 (ix) a representative from a Commonwealth advocacy  
25 group that represents the interests of sexual assault  
26 victims with experience in providing services to women  
27 veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma,  
28 including harassment or abuse;

29 (x) a representative from a county veteran's court;

30 and

1           (xi) the chairman of the State Veterans' Commission;  
2 and be it further

3       RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
4 study the health care needs of women veterans, including, but  
5 not limited to:

6           (1) quality of and access to mental health services,  
7 including services and treatment for post-traumatic stress  
8 disorder and traumatic brain injury;

9           (2) in-patient treatment availability;

10          (3) adequacy and availability of appropriate women  
11 veterans' health care within the Federal health care system  
12 and this Commonwealth; and

13          (4) adequacy, quality of and access to services  
14 providing for the identification and treatment of military  
15 sexual trauma, including sexual harassment or abuse;

16 and be it further

17       RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
18 identify other needs relating to the provisions of women  
19 veterans' health care services and make recommendations to the  
20 General Assembly and the Governor to address those needs; and be  
21 it further

22       RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
23 consult with Federal, State and local entities in completing its  
24 study, including:

25           (1) The Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation.

26           (2) The United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

27           (3) The County Commissioners Association of  
28 Pennsylvania.

29           (4) The Pennsylvania Municipal League.

30           (5) The Pennsylvania Medical Society.

1           (6) The Hospital and Health System Association of  
2           Pennsylvania.

3           (7) Veterans organizations or other organizations or  
4           associations that advocate for women veterans;

5           and be it further

6           RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
7           elect one of its members to serve as chairperson; and be it  
8           further

9           RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
10          conduct its business as follows:

11           (1) The physical presence of nine members constitutes a  
12          quorum of the task force.

13           (2) Action of the task force shall be authorized or  
14          ratified by a majority vote of its members.

15           (3) A member not physically present may participate by  
16          teleconference or video conference.

17           (4) The following shall apply:

18           (i) The task force shall meet as necessary, but no  
19          fewer than five times prior to April 30, 2016. Additional  
20          meetings may be called by the chairperson as necessary.

21           (ii) The chairperson shall schedule a meeting upon  
22          written request of eight members of the task force.

23           (iii) The first meeting shall be convened within 45  
24          days of the adoption of this resolution by both chambers  
25          at a time and place established by the Governor.

26           (iv) The task force shall hold public hearings as  
27          necessary to obtain the information required to conduct  
28          its review.

29           (v) Members shall not receive compensation but shall  
30          be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses

1           incurred in service of the task force;

2 and be it further

3       RESOLVED, That the Department of Health and the Department of  
4 Military and Veterans Affairs provide staff support to the task  
5 force; and be it further

6       RESOLVED, That, upon request of the Task Force on Women  
7 Veterans' Health Care, a State agency assist the task force in  
8 the completion of its duties, including, to the extent permitted  
9 by law, relating to confidentiality to furnish information and  
10 advice to members of the task force necessary to perform their  
11 duties; and be it further

12       RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
13 have the following powers:

14           (1) To examine and analyze the current delivery of  
15 health care services to women veterans at the Federal and  
16 State level.

17           (2) To review and analyze law, procedures, practices and  
18 rules relating to delivery of health care services to women  
19 veterans.

20           (3) To hold public hearings for the taking of testimony  
21 and the requesting of documents.

22           (4) To administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses  
23 appearing before the task force at the request of the  
24 chairperson;

25 and be it further

26       RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
27 have the following duties:

28           (1) To accept and review written comments from  
29 individuals and organizations.

30           (2) To make, by April 30, 2016, a final report to the

1 Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

2 (3) To include in the report under paragraph (2)  
3 recommendations to:

4 (i) improve the delivery of health care services to  
5 women veterans; and

6 (ii) implement any necessary changes in State  
7 statutes and practices, policies and procedures relating  
8 to the delivery of health care services to women  
9 veterans.

10 (4) To make reports as follows:

11 (i) The task force may file status reports and  
12 updates with the Governor, the Senate and the House of  
13 Representatives as it deems appropriate.

14 (ii) A report under this paragraph shall be adopted  
15 at a public meeting.

16 (iii) A report under this paragraph shall be a  
17 public record under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6,  
18 No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law;

19 and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care  
21 expire May 31, 2016.