

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 3

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By: **Senator Peters**

Introduced and read first time: February 20, 2013

Assigned to: Rules

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Crisis in Waiting Periods for Veterans with Disabilities to Receive Services**
3 **from the Federal Veterans Benefits Administration**

4 FOR the purpose of urging that certain actions be taken by certain entities to address
5 the long waiting periods for veterans with disabilities who file disability
6 compensation claims with a certain office to receive services and compensation
7 from the federal Veterans Benefits Administration; providing that a copy of the
8 resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to certain
9 individuals; and generally relating to the crisis in waiting periods for veterans
10 with disabilities to receive services from the federal Veterans Benefits
11 Administration.

12 WHEREAS, Documented significant mistakes regarding medical claims filed
13 with the federal Veterans Benefits Administration mean that many veterans with
14 disabilities are denied full compensation for their injuries, while others are
15 overcompensated; and

16 WHEREAS, Maryland is ranked number one in education, entrepreneurship,
17 and research and development and Maryland should be ranked number one in veteran
18 services; and

19 WHEREAS, Veterans who file disability compensation claims at the Baltimore
20 Regional Office of the federal Veterans Benefits Administration face a 25% chance of
21 those claims being mishandled; and

22 WHEREAS, The performance of the Baltimore Regional Office is among the
23 nation's worst, with claims filed by veterans seeking disability compensation pending
24 429 days on average, 6 times the federal Veterans Benefits Administration's goal of
25 125 days, and 162 days longer than the national average; and



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1 WHEREAS, The wait for those who file claims with the Baltimore Regional
2 Office, which serves nearly 500,000 veterans living in Maryland, is longer than any of
3 the federal Veterans Benefits Administration's 56 offices; and

4 WHEREAS, The Baltimore Regional Office has a 73.8% accuracy rate, which is
5 the second worst in the country; now, therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
7 General Assembly:

8 (1) urges Congress to fully investigate the actions of the federal
9 Veterans Benefits Administration, including management, information technology,
10 and customer services, that lead to long waiting times for veterans with disabilities to
11 receive compensation and services;

12 (2) urges Congress to hold hearings to identify gaps in management
13 and technology that are causing significant delays in claims and service to veterans
14 with disabilities;

15 (3) urges that an audit be conducted and that there be a
16 reorganization in management of the Baltimore Regional Office of the federal
17 Veterans Benefits Administration;

18 (4) urges the federal Department of Veterans Affairs to formulate and
19 take expeditious steps to stop the mishandling of claims of veterans with disabilities
20 and resolve all issues at the Baltimore Regional Office that are resulting in delayed
21 services and compensation for veterans with disabilities;

22 (5) urges Congress to hold the federal Veterans Benefits
23 Administration accountable for the management issues in the Baltimore Regional
24 Office that are causing distress to veterans; and

25 (6) urges the federal Veterans Benefits Administration to fill critical
26 vacancies in the Baltimore Regional Office to handle the increasing backlog in claims;
27 and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
29 Legislative Services to the Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs,
30 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.
31 20420; and the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Barbara A. Mikulski
32 and Benjamin L. Cardin, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and
33 Representatives C. A. Dutch Ruppertsberger, III, John P. Sarbanes, Donna Edwards,
34 Steny Hamilton Hoyer, Andrew P. Harris, John K. Delaney, Elijah E. Cummings, and
35 Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.