

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 6008

A RESOLUTION memorializing the President of the United States and the United States Congress to provide ongoing assistance to Gulf War veterans and their families who suffer persistent symptoms of various kinds described now as Gulf War illness.

WHEREAS, Nearly 700,000 members of the United States armed forces, including 7,500 Kansans, deployed to the Persian Gulf region during 1990 and 1991 to participate in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm to liberate Kuwait; and

WHEREAS, These Gulf War veterans have been, and continue to be, afflicted by an abnormally high rate of unexplained health problems. To date federal research efforts have not identified the prevalence, patterns, causes or treatments for illnesses suffered by Gulf War veterans. Yet thousands of our veterans continue to suffer from a variety of chronic symptoms; and

WHEREAS, The Kansas Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Initiative, a project of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs, primarily through the efforts of Dr. Lea Steele, has completed a scientific study of 2,000 Kansas Gulf War veterans with the results being published in the American Journal of Epidemiology. Major findings of this study include:

Kansas Gulf War veterans have significantly more health problems than veterans who served in other areas. The study results indicate these conditions may have been caused by multiple factors.

A pattern of chronic symptoms, Gulf War illness, was identified. Thirty-four percent of Kansas Gulf War veterans report a pattern of chronic symptoms that include joint pain, respiratory problems, neuropsychologic difficulties, diarrhea, skin rashes, and fatigue. Veterans with Gulf War illness experience a pattern of multiple types of symptoms that can persist for years, problems that can be severe and disabling for some veterans.

The rates of Gulf War illness can be linked to where and when veterans served in the Persian Gulf region. Veterans who served on board ship had the lowest rates (21%), with higher rates in veterans who had been stationed in support areas of Saudi Arabia (31%), and highest rates in veterans who were in Iraq or Kuwait (42%). In addition, veterans who served only during Desert Shield have a low rate of illness (9%), while those who were in the Persian Gulf region several months after the war ended have higher rates (36-43%).

Veterans who did not deploy to the Persian Gulf, but reported getting vaccines during the war, may have some of the same health problems as Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, While it has been established that Gulf War veterans suffer from an abnormally high rate of unexplained health problems, the cause, or causes of these varied conditions have not been determined, and the system for providing care and treatment of these veterans has been inadequate or nonresponsive to the conditions presented; and

WHEREAS, Gulf War illness has had a severe negative impact on the physical and emotional well-being of Gulf War veterans, and has affected their ability to work, yet adequate compensation for these conditions has not been received by these veterans; and

WHEREAS, Service connected illnesses have not been addressed adequately for veterans of past wars and conflicts: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas:* That we memorialize the President and the Congress of the United States to provide funding for Gulf War illness research independent of that administered by the United States Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs; and to establish a process of independent review of federal policies and programs associated with Gulf War illness research, benefits, and health care; and

*Be it further resolved:* That we urge further assistance to veterans afflicted with Gulf War illness, whether by the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs or another designated organization, to provide badly needed health care, vocational assistance and disability compensation; and that there be public service announcements informing veterans across the nation of the findings of this research and informing the veterans of the programs that are available to help them; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be directed to provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Vice-President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and to each member of the Kansas Congressional delegation; to the Governor of the State of Kansas, the Secretary of Health and Environment, the Secretary of Human Resources, and the Chairman of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs; and to the National and State Commanders of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans, National Retired Officers Association, National Retired Enlisted Association and the National Order of the Purple Heart.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the HOUSE, and was adopted by that body

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Speaker of the House.

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Chief Clerk of the House.