

House Joint Memorial 2

Ordered printed by the Speaker pursuant to House Rule 12.00A (5). Pre-session filed (at the request of House Interim Committee on Veterans and Emergency Services)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Urges Congress to mandate payment for treatment of military sexual trauma provided outside veterans facilities and to require experienced military sexual trauma counselors at veterans facilities.

JOINT MEMORIAL

To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

We, your memorialists, the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

Whereas our nation has no greater duty to our veterans than to provide them with the best medical care possible and to support them with programs and policies that improve their quality of life before, during and after deployment; and

Whereas military sexual trauma, which includes sexual harassment and sexual assault that occur in military settings, is experienced by both men and women; and

Whereas a large study of sexual victimization among service members on active duty found rates of sexual harassment to be 78 percent among women and 38 percent among men; and

Whereas in a study conducted by the United States Department of Defense, the rate of military sexual trauma among veterans who use Veterans Health Administration facilities was higher than the rate in the general military population; and

Whereas there is a wide range of emotional reactions reported by veterans in response to sexual victimization; and

Whereas most military groups are characterized by high unit cohesion, particularly during combat; and

Whereas the dynamics of unit cohesion play a role in the negative psychological effects of military sexual trauma because divulging negative information about a fellow soldier is considered taboo, thus making victims reluctant to report military sexual trauma; and

Whereas the United States Department of Veterans Affairs often does not pay for treatment of military sexual trauma outside of the Veterans Health Administration system; and

Whereas the veterans health care system is overburdened and incapable of meeting demand, thus forcing veterans who desperately need treatment for military sexual trauma to seek help from private practitioners; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

(1) That the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly urges the Congress of the United States to enact legislation that:

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

HJM 2

1 (a) Mandates that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs pay for military sexual
2 trauma treatment provided outside of Veterans Health Administration facilities; and

3 (b) Requires that at least one experienced military sexual trauma counselor be on staff at every
4 Vet Center.

5 (2) A copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to the Senate
6 Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to each member of the Oregon
7 Congressional Delegation.

8
