

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001**

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HOUSE RESOLUTION 1780

Sponsors: Representatives Nye; Warwick and Justus.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

July 31, 2002

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED
2 STATES AND THE PRESIDENT TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH
3 A FEDERAL/STATE PARTNERSHIP TO USE LOCAL COUNTY VETERANS
4 SERVICE OFFICERS TO ASSIST THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
5 VETERANS AFFAIRS IN ELIMINATING THE VETERANS CLAIMS
6 PROCESSING BACKLOG.

7 Whereas, the United States presently has a population of over 25 million
8 veterans from its previous wars, with the majority of that veteran population from
9 World War II and the Korean War; and

10 Whereas, the World War II and Korean War veteran population is presently
11 over 70 years of age, and that group is passing away at the rate of 1,000 veterans per
12 day; and

13 Whereas, the United States government has acknowledged its responsibility
14 to provide medical care or compensation for medical problems, as well as other
15 benefits, to those veterans who served their country in time of war; and

16 Whereas, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is charged with
17 administering the federal benefits program for veterans; and

18 Whereas, there presently exists a backlog of over 601,000 claims, some of
19 which have been outstanding for one year or more; and

20 Whereas, a significant portion of these claims involve World War II and
21 Korean War veterans, and despite determined efforts by the United States Department
22 of Veterans Affairs to eliminate this backlog, the backlog continues; and

23 Whereas, there exists a trained group of individuals known as county veterans
24 service officers located in 37 of the 50 states, representing 700 counties and a workforce
25 of over 2,400 full-time local government employees; and

26 Whereas, these county veterans service officers were established in 1945 after
27 World War II for the purpose of helping returning veterans reenter civilian life, and
28 have continued to do so for all veterans of all wars since then; and

29 Whereas, these county veterans service officers are highly trained individuals
30 who have continued to provide assistance to all veterans for over 50 years and are

1 already familiar with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs claim policies
2 and procedures; and

3 Whereas, for example, in North Carolina county veterans service officers
4 annually assist North Carolina veterans obtain monetary benefits in excess of
5 \$812,000,000 by assisting these veterans in filing over 50,000 claims annually with the
6 United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and

7 Whereas, this claims processing backlog needs to be urgently reduced while
8 our World War II and Korean War veterans are still with us; and

9 Whereas, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs could enter into a
10 partnership with state and local governments to utilize these highly trained county
11 veterans service officers to eliminate the present claims processing backlog by
12 expanding the county veterans service officers' roles; and

13 Whereas, this would be a cost-effective way of reducing the claims
14 processing backlog by eliminating the need for a substantial increase in federal
15 employees; and

16 Whereas, these county veterans service officers, as represented by the North
17 Carolina Association of County Veterans Service Officers and the National Association
18 of County Veterans Service Officers, have offered to assist the United States
19 Department of Veterans Affairs in exchange for block grants to the various states based
20 upon each state's veteran population to compensate county veterans service officers for
21 their expanded role; Now, therefore,

22 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

23 **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives urges the Congress of the
24 United States and the President to support and enact legislation that would establish a
25 federal/state partnership to use the knowledge and skills of the local county veterans
26 service officers to assist the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in eliminating
27 the veterans claims processing backlog in order that America's veterans can take
28 advantage of the benefits that the United States has authorized for them for their faithful
29 and loyal service to a grateful nation.

30 **SECTION 2.** The Principal Clerk shall transmit copies of this resolution to
31 the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of
32 Representatives, the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
33 Representative from North Carolina in the Congress of the United States.

34 **SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.