

Resolution to Make VA Health Care Funding Mandatory

WHEREAS the funding for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care under the federal budget is a discretionary program, meaning that it is within the discretion of Congress to determine how much money it will allocate each year for veterans' medical care;

WHEREAS Title 38 United States Code, Section 1710(a), provides that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs "shall" furnish hospital care and medical services, but only to the extent Congress has provided money to cover the costs of the care;

WHEREAS the cumulative effects of insufficient health care funding have now resulted in the rationing of health care, including mental health care;

WHEREAS the VA reports that it has now reached capacity at many of its health care facilities;

WHEREAS the VA is unable to provide timely access to quality health care to many of our nation's most severely disabled service-connected veterans;

WHEREAS it is disingenuous for our government to promise health care to veterans but then make it unattainable because of inadequate funding;

WHEREAS making veterans' health care funding mandatory would ensure that the government meets its obligation to provide health care, including mental health care, to veterans who have a service-connected disability and would ensure that all veterans eligible for care in the VA healthcare system have access to timely, quality health care;

WHEREAS making veterans' health care funding mandatory would eliminate the year-to-year uncertainties about funding levels that have prevented the VA from being able to adequately plan for and meet the constantly growing number of veterans seeking treatment; and

WHEREAS by including all veterans currently eligible and enrolled for care in the mandatory health care funding proposal, we protect the overall viability of the system and the specialized programs the VA has developed to improve the health and well-being of our nation's service-connected disabled veterans;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington State Democratic Party (WSDCC) support legislation to make VA health care funding a mandatory entitlement program, including necessary increases to offset ongoing expenses resulting from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, thereby guaranteeing sufficient resources to cover the expenses of the veteran's health care program;

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45 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that in order to provide such quality
46 lifelong medical care, it is imperative that the government fully fund the operation and
47 maintenance of local Veterans' Hospitals, like the Jonathan Wainwright Veterans
48 Memorial Hospital in Walla Walla, which enable veterans to receive care near their
49 homes and families; and

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51 **THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that Washington State Democratic Party
52 distribute copies of this resolution to all Democratic members of the Washington State
53 Congressional delegation and Democratic Presidential Candidates Hillary Clinton and
54 Barack Obama.

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57 Submitted by the Chelan County Democrats to the Democratic Central Committee for
58 consideration at its June 14 convention in Spokane. (Date Submitted 4/30/2008)

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60 The Resolutions Committee "AMENDED THIS RESOLUTION AND RECOMMENDED
61 A PASS" at its May 31, 2008 meeting in Ellensburg.

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63 The Washington State Democratic Convention "PASSED" this resolution at its June 14,
64 2008 meeting in Spokane.