

Date of Hearing: March 27, 2012

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
Paul J. Cook, Chair
ACR 107 (Eng, Cook) – As Introduced: February 13, 2012

SUBJECT: PTSD Awareness Day

SUMMARY: ACR 107 would educate the California public about the causes, symptoms, and treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its impact on our United States Armed Forces veterans.

Specifically, this resolution: would recognize June 27, 2012, as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day.

EXISTING LAW: United States Senate Resolution 541, 2010, designates June 27, 2010 as National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day. US Senate Resolution 541 urges the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense to continue working to educate servicemembers, veterans, the families of servicemembers and veterans, and the public about the causes, symptoms, and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder. It also respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit a copy of the resolution to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, however, this bill is a resolution and is not keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS: According to the author:

1. The incidence of PTSD in members of the military is rising because hundreds of thousands of soldiers are exposed to traumatic life-threatening events.
2. According to the National Institute for Mental Health, PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened.
3. The federal Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that as many as 95 percent of veterans returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan have some form of PTSD.
4. Although the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs have made significant advances in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of PTSD and the symptoms of PTSD, many challenges remain.
5. This resolution is intended to educate the public about the struggles faced by our service men and women returning home.

In 2005 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs noted a 30% increase in PTSD claims in recent years. It also estimated that 830,000 Vietnam War veterans suffered symptoms of PTSD. A 2011 study from Georgia State University and San Diego State University found that rates of PTSD diagnosis increased significantly when troops were stationed in combat zones, had tours of longer than a year, experienced combat, or were injured. Military personnel serving in

combat zones were 12.1 percentage points more likely to receive a PTSD diagnosis than their active-duty counterparts in non-combat zones. Those serving more than 12 months in a combat zone were 14.3 percentage points more likely to be diagnosed with PTSD than those who served less than one year. Experiencing an enemy firefight was associated a 18.3 percentage point increase in the probability of PTSD, while being wounded or injured in combat was associated a 23.9 percentage point increase in the likelihood of a PTSD diagnosis.

In California there is an estimated veteran population of 1,972,000, with more expected due to the drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan. The United States currently recognizes June 27th as National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day, and this resolution would bring California, which holds 8.7% of the nation's veterans, up to date with the federal measure.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
The American Legion-Department of California
AMVETS- Department of California
California Association of County Veterans Service Officers
California State Commanders Veterans Council

Opposition

None on File

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