
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 348 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY FARRY, DeLISSIO, RYAN, POLINCHOCK, DONATUCCI,
MURT, JAMES, MIHALEK, MILLARD, HOWARD, KINSEY, READSHAW,
ECKER, ISAACSON, THOMAS, NEILSON, HILL-EVANS, FRANKEL,
FREEMAN, DALEY, SAINATO, McCLINTON AND GILLEN, MAY 23, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, MAY 23, 2019

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Establishing the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care.

2 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of
3 Veterans Affairs, the projected veteran population nationwide is
4 23 million, with women making up an estimated 10% of that
5 population; and

6 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs
7 estimates the percentage of female veterans between 2010 and
8 2040 will increase from 9% in 2010 to 18% in 2040; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of
10 Veterans Affairs, as of September 2012, this Commonwealth was
11 home to approximately 981,000 veterans, including 719,000
12 wartime veterans from World War II through the Gulf War; and

13 WHEREAS, Females comprise approximately 80,000 of the wartime
14 veterans; and

15 WHEREAS, The number of women veterans will increase with the
16 end of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Women veterans often face unique challenges in
3 transitioning from active duty to civilian life; and

4 WHEREAS, The challenging needs facing women veterans can
5 often be overlooked when providing services to a large veteran
6 population; and

7 WHEREAS, Ensuring the availability of specialized services
8 for physical and mental health, including treatment of post-
9 traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military
10 sexual trauma and alcohol and substance abuse, tailored to the
11 specific needs of women veterans is essential to ensure that our
12 returning veterans receive proper care; and

13 WHEREAS, Establishing a task force to study the issues facing
14 women veterans and to make recommendations to the Governor and
15 the General Assembly will provide much-needed information and
16 insight from those who address the issues on a daily basis;
17 therefore be it

18 RESOLVED (the Senate concurring), That the Task Force on
19 Women Veterans' Health Care be established; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
21 consist of members who shall be appointed as follows within 25
22 days after the adoption of this resolution by both chambers:

23 (1) Two members of the Senate, one appointed by the
24 President pro tempore and one appointed by the Minority
25 Leader of the Senate.

26 (2) Two members of the House of Representatives, one
27 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and
28 one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
29 Representatives.

30 (3) Members appointed by the Governor as follows:

1 (i) the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs
2 of the Pennsylvania National Guard;

3 (ii) the Secretary of Health;

4 (iii) the Secretary of Human Services;

5 (iv) the Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs;

6 (v) four women veterans who are residents of this
7 Commonwealth;

8 (vi) a representative from the health care provider
9 community in this Commonwealth who has experience in
10 providing health care to returning women veterans;

11 (vii) a representative from the Commonwealth's
12 mental health care provider community with experience in
13 providing mental health care treatment to returning women
14 veterans;

15 (viii) a representative from the Commonwealth's
16 substance abuse and addiction treatment provider
17 community with experience in providing substance abuse
18 and addiction treatment to returning women veterans;

19 (ix) a representative from a Commonwealth advocacy
20 group that represents the interests of sexual assault
21 victims with experience in providing services to women
22 veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma,
23 including harassment or abuse;

24 (x) a representative from a county veteran's court;
25 and

26 (xi) the chairman of the State Veterans' Commission;
27 and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
29 study the health care needs of women veterans, including:

30 (1) quality of and access to mental health services,

1 including services and treatment for post-traumatic stress
2 disorder and traumatic brain injury;

3 (2) in-patient treatment availability;

4 (3) adequacy and availability of appropriate women
5 veterans' health care within the Federal health care system
6 and this Commonwealth; and

7 (4) adequacy, quality of and access to services
8 providing for the identification and treatment of military
9 sexual trauma, including sexual harassment or abuse;

10 and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
12 identify other needs relating to the provisions of women
13 veterans' health care services and make recommendations to the
14 General Assembly and the Governor to address those needs; and be
15 it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
17 consult with Federal, State and local entities in completing the
18 study, including:

19 (1) The Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation.

20 (2) The United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

21 (3) The County Commissioners Association of
22 Pennsylvania.

23 (4) The Pennsylvania Municipal League.

24 (5) The Pennsylvania Medical Society.

25 (6) The Hospital and HealthSystem Association of
26 Pennsylvania.

27 (7) Veterans organizations or other organizations or
28 associations that advocate for women veterans;

29 and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care

1 elect one of its members to serve as chairperson; and be it
2 further

3 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
4 conduct its business as follows:

5 (1) The physical presence of nine members constitutes a
6 quorum of the task force.

7 (2) Action of the task force shall be authorized or
8 ratified by a majority vote of its members.

9 (3) A member not physically present may participate by
10 teleconference or video conference.

11 (4) The following shall apply:

12 (i) The task force shall meet as necessary, but no
13 fewer than five times prior to October 31, 2020.

14 Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson as
15 necessary.

16 (ii) The chairperson shall schedule a meeting upon
17 written request of eight members of the task force.

18 (iii) The first meeting shall be convened within 45
19 days of the adoption of this resolution by both chambers
20 at a time and place established by the Governor.

21 (iv) The task force shall hold public hearings as
22 necessary to obtain the information required to conduct
23 its review.

24 (v) Members may not receive compensation but shall
25 be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses
26 incurred in service of the task force;

27 and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the Department of Health and the Department of
29 Military and Veterans Affairs provide staff support to the task
30 force; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That, upon request of the Task Force on Women
2 Veterans' Health Care, a State agency assist the task force in
3 the completion of its duties, including, to the extent permitted
4 by law relating to confidentiality, furnishing information and
5 advice to members of the task force necessary to perform their
6 duties; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
8 have the following powers:

9 (1) To examine and analyze the current delivery of
10 health care services to women veterans at the Federal and
11 State level.

12 (2) To review and analyze law, procedures, practices and
13 rules relating to delivery of health care services to women
14 veterans.

15 (3) To hold public hearings for the taking of testimony
16 and the requesting of documents.

17 (4) To administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses
18 appearing before the task force at the request of the
19 chairperson;

20 and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
22 have the following duties:

23 (1) To accept and review written comments from
24 individuals and organizations.

25 (2) To make, by October 31, 2020, a final report to the
26 Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

27 (3) To include in the report under paragraph (2)
28 recommendations to:

29 (i) improve the delivery of health care services to
30 women veterans; and

1 (ii) implement necessary changes in State statutes
2 and practices, policies and procedures relating to the
3 delivery of health care services to women veterans.

4 (4) To make reports as follows:

5 (i) The task force may file status reports and
6 updates with the Governor, the Senate and the House of
7 Representatives as it deems appropriate.

8 (ii) A report under this paragraph shall be adopted
9 at a public meeting.

10 (iii) A report under this paragraph shall be a
11 public record under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6,
12 No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law;

13 and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care
15 expire within 14 days of making a final report.