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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 473

Offered January 25, 2001

Memorializing Congress to reinstate full medical benefits for veterans aged 65 and older.

Patron—Wagner

Unanimous consent to introduce

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth and the General Assembly recognize and acknowledge the contributions of veterans to our democratic system and to the freedoms we all enjoy; and

WHEREAS, retired veterans, those aged 65 and older, served during foreign crises of the 20th century at such places as the Ardennes, Kasserine Pass, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Normandy, Bastogne, Anzio, and Iwo Jima; and

WHEREAS, they also served during the Korean War at Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir, and in Vietnam at DaNang, Khe Sanh, and Quang Tri; and

WHEREAS, these retired veterans now constitute a significant portion of the senior population of the United States and, in particular, of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the retired veterans were guaranteed through contract, both stated and implied, lifetime access to medical benefits for themselves and their immediate family members upon retirement from the armed services with 20 years or more of service; and

WHEREAS, prior to their own retirement at age 65, these veterans were provided health care through the military health care system or through other U.S. Department of Defense programs; and

WHEREAS, through recent federal regulatory changes in entitlements for military health care benefits, these older veterans and their family members have lost significant portions of their health care support system; and

WHEREAS, the medical benefits, which were lost through changes to federal legislation, forced these veterans to pay out-of-pocket for medical coverage from alternative sources and to join omnibus national health programs, such as Medicare; and

WHEREAS, many veteran retirees and their immediate families live on fixed incomes, and the loss of medical benefits significantly impacts their quality of life, disrupts their needed levels of care, and puts out of reach certain health care benefits and pharmaceutical support to which they had previously been entitled; and

WHEREAS, many of these veteran retirees, still suffering from service-connected injuries and serious illnesses, have found their access to medical treatment facilities limited by downsizing or, in some rural areas, elimination of needed facilities; and

WHEREAS, these honorable men and women, who have served and sacrificed in the uniformed service of this nation, are deserving of the health care programs that they were guaranteed when they completed 20 years or more of service; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has a special charge to safeguard and maintain the quality of life for its citizens who have served and earned retirement benefits from military service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby urge the Congress to reinstate full medical benefits for those qualified veterans who have reached age 65 or over; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, and the members of the Virginia Congressional delegation so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia.

INTRODUCED

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