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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 207
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
on February 28, 2018)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Reeves)

Commending the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section.

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section won the Governor's Technology Award in the IT as Efficiency Driver - Government to Government category for the BeneVets Automated Claim Application; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's prestigious Governor's Technology Awards program recognizes public sector information technology projects that improve government service delivery and efficiency; and

WHEREAS, the BeneVets Automated Claim Application allows the agency to develop and submit veterans' claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs entirely through electronic processes; and

WHEREAS, the Application eliminates extensive paper usage, significantly reduces postage and supply cost, and, most importantly, decreases the time it takes for a veteran's claim to move through the state and federal process; and

WHEREAS, since 2014, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section has greatly enhanced and increased its ability to serve veterans in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section works to provide veterans with timely and ethical education and assistance in obtaining the federal benefits earned through their service and sacrifice to the nation; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section traces its history to the War Claims Bureau in the 1920s; the Virginia Department of Veterans Services was formed in 2003 to consolidate veterans' benefits, health care, and cemeteries under one agency; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section adopted a comprehensive strategy to address underfunding, inefficient processes, and low morale and to ultimately provide better service to the Commonwealth's veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section now comprises an operations office, a training office, and a Center of Excellence, which are all focused on transparency, accountability, veteran feedback, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section established a quality assurance team, appeals team, legal liaison, and state liaison and utilized the BeneVets Automated Claim Application system and an award-winning electronic filing system to increase accuracy and accountability; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section implemented new training programs and standards to give employees the tools for success, and it hired outreach coordinators to build strong relationships with the community; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services opened several new Benefits offices and renovated or relocated others throughout the Commonwealth to add modern furnishings and equipment; and

WHEREAS, since 2014, Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section offices assisted more than 550,000 veterans and filed more than 100,000 compensation and pension claims worth more than \$8 billion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section for winning the 2015 Governor's Technology Award in the IT as Efficiency Driver - Government to Government category for the BeneVets Automated Claim Application; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Department of Veterans Services as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the work and achievements of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefits section to enhance the quality of life of veterans in the Commonwealth.