

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 152

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should request assistance from the Commissioner of Social Security in fulfilling the Secretary's mandate to provide outreach to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 3, 2001

Mrs. LINCOLN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Veterans' Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should request assistance from the Commissioner of Social Security in fulfilling the Secretary's mandate to provide outreach to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors.

Whereas the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a statutory mandate to provide outreach to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors;

Whereas the most recent survey conducted by the VA indicates that many veterans and survivors are unaware of benefits they are eligible to receive;

Whereas recent press reports indicate many veterans are not aware that they are eligible for low-cost prescription medications as part of medical care provided by the VA;

Whereas some VA outreach initiatives, such as the Health Benefits Hotline (1-877-222-VETS), are somewhat recent;

Whereas more than 9,000,000 veterans receive Social Security benefits;

Whereas the number of members of the largest group of veterans, the Vietnam Era veterans, who are awarded Social Security disability and retirement insurance benefits will increase over time;

Whereas the Social Security Administration sends more than 45,000,000 cost-of-living adjustment notices to its beneficiaries each year;

Whereas the Social Security Administration sends more than 2,000,000 award notices to newly-entitled disability and retirement insurance beneficiaries each year;

Whereas more than 100,000 persons visit the field offices of the Social Security Administration every workday;

Whereas the Social Security Administration has 65,000 employees, most of whom come into contact with the public;

Whereas many Social Security beneficiaries who are veterans could benefit from VA medical care because they do not have prescription drug coverage or are not currently eligible for Medicare; and

Whereas many Social Security beneficiaries are eligible for additional income through the VA's pension and compensation programs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

1 (1) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should re-
2 quest assistance from the Commissioner of Social
3 Security in fulfilling the Secretary's mandate to pro-
4 vide outreach to veterans, dependents, and survivors;
5 and

6 (2) such assistance should include—

7 (A) using the December 2002 Social Secu-
8 rity cost-of-living adjustment notice as a means
9 of publicizing the VA Health Benefits Hotline
10 and the fact that the Department of Veterans
11 Affairs (VA) provides comprehensive health
12 care, including prescription medications, to vet-
13 erans;

14 (B) using Social Security award notices for
15 retirement insurance and disability insurance
16 benefits to publicize the VA Health Benefits
17 Hotline and the fact that the VA provides com-
18 prehensive health care, including prescription
19 medications, to veterans;

20 (C) distributing VA publications that de-
21 scribe the cash, health, and other benefits avail-
22 able through the VA to all Social Security Ad-
23 ministration field offices so that these publica-
24 tions may be provided to members of the public
25 who visit such offices; and

1 (D) broadcasting information to all em-
2 ployees at the Social Security Administration
3 who have contact with the public regarding the
4 health care benefits (including the availability
5 of prescription medications as part of treat-
6 ment) available through the VA, each pension
7 and compensation program of the VA, and
8 other benefits available through the VA so that
9 employees at the Social Security Administration
10 can inform veterans about VA programs.

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