

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1683

Recognizing the Department of Defense for its work in identifying the dangers of tinnitus, or the perception of sound where no external source of such sound exists, for members of the Armed Forces subjected to blast injuries and high-decibel equipment.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

Mr. COLE (for himself, Mr. TEAGUE, Ms. FALLIN, and Mr. BOREN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Department of Defense for its work in identifying the dangers of tinnitus, or the perception of sound where no external source of such sound exists, for members of the Armed Forces subjected to blast injuries and high-decibel equipment.

Whereas tinnitus, or the perception of sound where no external source of such sound exists, is the most prevalent disabling condition that affects members of the Armed Forces, most notably those members who have been exposed to blast injuries during combat or to other high-noise-level situations;

Whereas tinnitus is the leading service-connected disability for members of the Armed Forces returning from Iraq or

Afghanistan and the prevalence of tinnitus is continuing to increase at alarming rates;

Whereas at the end of 2009, more than 750,000 veterans had been determined to have a service-connected disability related to tinnitus;

Whereas an otologic, or ear injury such as tinnitus, has been shown to decrease performance and situational awareness during combat, seriously compromising the ability of a member of the Armed Forces to hear and execute commands properly, thereby jeopardizing not only the affected member but other members as well;

Whereas while certain types of sensory impairment in combat or other military activities may be readily apparent, otologic injuries such as tinnitus may not be easily noticeable, which necessitates the need for more rigorous screening for tinnitus before and after deployment, and for additional research to distinguish tinnitus from other forms of brain injury incurred during combat;

Whereas some medical evidence to date suggests a demonstrated link between tinnitus and posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, such that improved understanding of treatment of tinnitus may also directly advance research efforts to address posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury;

Whereas improving the treatment and prevention of tinnitus will benefit all members of the Armed Forces who are increasingly at risk of injury from high-decibel equipment or explosive devices;

Whereas even though there are recommended maximum allowable exposure times, cumulative noise exposure, even at “safe” levels, can cause tinnitus over time;

Whereas, in this age of amplified sound, many everyday noise sources produce decibel levels that can be hazardous to hearing and can result in tinnitus and other types of hearing loss;

Whereas the Army is the only branch of the Armed Forces that requires earplugs as part of the uniform, but many types of military equipment exceed the 85 DBA limit;

Whereas between all public and private funding in the United States, only \$10,000,000 is given to tinnitus research, far behind what is spent on research for most other medical conditions; and

Whereas new, sophisticated brain-imaging technologies have allowed scientists to identify the areas of the brain that involve tinnitus and have led scientists to study tinnitus on several new fronts: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the Department of Defense for
3 its work in identifying the dangers of tinnitus;

4 (2) encourages the Department of Defense to
5 continue to educate members of the Armed Forces
6 of the potential threats of unprotected exposure to
7 high-decibel sounds; and

8 (3) encourages both the Department of Defense
9 and public institutions to continue their important
10 work researching this medical condition.

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