

State of South Dakota

EIGHTIETH SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2005

732L0323

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. **1007**

Introduced by: Representatives Lange, Bradford, Dennert, Gassman, Glenski, Glover, Halverson, Hargens, Roberts, Sigdestad, Street, Thompson, and Van Norman and Senators Moore, Hanson (Gary), Hundstad, Kloucek, and Two Bulls

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Urging the United States Congress to enhance federal
2 veterans benefits for members of the National Guard and other reserve components of the
3 armed forces who have been called into active federal service.

4 WHEREAS, those who dedicate their lives to protecting our nation perform a brave and
5 valuable service to our state and nation and are deserving of special legislative recognition; and

6 WHEREAS, in recent years, the United States has suffered significant loss of life and
7 property in terrorist attacks, culminating in the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade
8 Center and the Pentagon; and

9 WHEREAS, the United States is now engaged in combat on several domestic and
10 international fronts, being fought by all of the nation's military forces; and

11 WHEREAS, the size of the active duty United States military forces has been steadily
12 reduced by approximately one-third since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, so that
13 National Guard and Reserve troops now account for nearly one-half of the United States' total
14 military strength; and

15 WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has mobilized more National Guard and Reserve



1 members for the Global War on Terrorism than for any other national emergency since World
2 War II. Nearly forty percent of United States military personnel currently serving in Operation
3 Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are National Guard and Reserve troops who
4 are serving in a manner equivalent to the service of our regular active duty troops; and

5 WHEREAS, National Guard and Reserve members are highly skilled and fully cross-trained
6 for domestic emergency and counter-terrorism missions and deployments abroad. Since
7 September 11, 2001, they have been deployed in large numbers for both types of missions; and

8 WHEREAS, all of the activated National Guard and Reserve troops face substantial burdens
9 and risks, including extended separations from family and loved ones; postponement of
10 educational and career development opportunities; forfeiting civilian job compensation and
11 benefits, while often incurring additional expenditures and increased personal and family debt;
12 facing the physical and psychological dangers of deployment to hostile regions, involvement in
13 combat, and the constant fear of death or maiming from roadside bombs, conventional weapons,
14 and other terrorist weapons; and enduring the challenges of transitioning back into civilian life
15 after each deployment, while preparing for the next deployment into active military duty; and

16 WHEREAS, the various federal benefits for National Guard and Reserve troops serving on
17 active duty are often significantly less than those received by the full-time military personnel
18 serving beside them in equivalent roles; and

19 WHEREAS, it is crucial that the nation retain these highly trained citizen-soldiers within
20 the National Guard and Reserves following the completion of each deployment into active
21 military service:

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Eightieth
23 Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the South Dakota
24 Legislature strongly urges the United States Congress to increase the benefits for National Guard

1 and Reserve members by designating full veterans status for National Guard and Reserve
2 members who have been ordered to active military duty under U.S.C., Title 10 or Title 32, and
3 who provide honorable service for the time period so ordered; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that National Guard and Reserve members who are ordered
5 to active military duty under U.S.C., Title 10 or Title 32, for a cumulative period of one hundred
6 eighty days or more may enroll in the active duty GI Bill for educational assistance; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that National Guard and Reserve members who are ordered
8 to active military duty under U.S.C., Title 10 or Title 32, for a cumulative period of thirty days
9 or more may enroll in individual and family TRICARE health insurance upon their
10 demobilization from active duty status and return to drill status, at a co-pay and premium rate
11 comparable to that of federal employees participating in similar health insurance programs; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each National Guard and Reserve member may
13 establish a pre-tax/tax deferred savings plan, similar to but apart from a 401K retirement plan,
14 which could be tapped without penalty to help cover financial expenses when the member is
15 mobilized into active duty; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that National Guard and Reserve members who have been
17 ordered to active military combat service be provided eligibility for burial in national
18 cemeteries; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the age of eligibility for retirement benefits be
20 advanced from age sixty to one year earlier for every two years beyond twenty years that a
21 person has provided honorable service in the National Guard or Reserve.