A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

- 1 SECTION 1. Women have served honorably and courageously in
- 2 all of America's wars and conflicts since the American
- 3 Revolution. With nearly fifteen per cent of the United States
- 4 Armed Forces consisting of women, the population of female
- 5 veterans is increasing exponentially and is projected to exceed
- 6 ten per cent of the total veteran population by the year 2020.
- 7 More than thirteen thousand female veterans reside in Hawaii
- 8 alone.
- 9 The circumstances and challenges faced by female veterans,
- 10 as well as women on active duty, are often different from those
- 11 of their male counterparts. Despite this, veterans' benefits
- 12 have traditionally been designed to address the needs of male
- 13 veterans.
- In recognition of a growing need to improve veterans'
- 15 services to address the specific needs of female veterans in
- 16 such areas as medical and mental health care, child care
- 17 services, housing, and financial assistance, Senate Resolution

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- 1 No. 6, S.D. 1 (2012) urged the United States Department of
- 2 Veterans Affairs and the Hawaii office of veterans' services to
- 3 develop comprehensive programs and services to address the needs
- 4 of female veterans and women on active duty. In response to
- 5 Senate Resolution No. 6, S.D. 1, the Hawaii office of veterans'
- 6 services established the Hawaii women military veterans task
- 7 force with the mission "to improve the lives of women veterans
- 8 who are serving or who have served in the military, to identify
- 9 and address the unique needs of women veterans, and to harness
- 10 the power of women to influence change."
- In 2013, after numerous meetings, the task force submitted
- 12 a report to the legislature that concluded that military women
- 13 face multiple interrelated complex problems, including a high
- 14 rate of military sexual trauma, and for female veterans, the
- 15 related reentry issues of adequate health care, high rates of
- 16 post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, and joblessness.
- 17 Furthermore, with the recent Department of Defense
- 18 announcement to allow women in all front-line combat jobs,
- 19 including infantry, artillery, armor, and special operations
- 20 units, even more program emphasis will be needed when these
- 21 military women eventually leave the service and become veterans.



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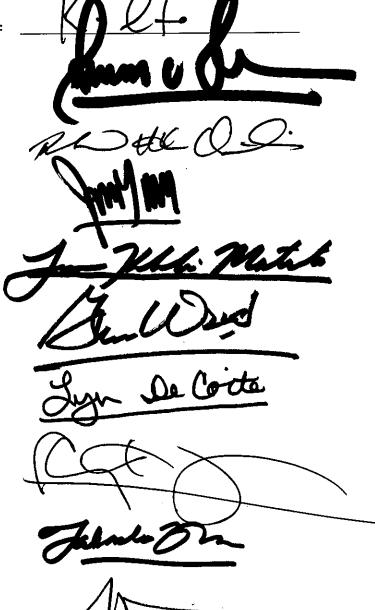
The legislature finds that one way to help address the 1 various problems and needs of veterans is to establish and fully 2 fund a veterans services counselor IV position within the office 3 of veterans' services to assist all veterans, with a primary 4 focus on female veterans who served on active duty. 5 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the 6 establishment of one full-time permanent veterans services 7 counselor IV position in the office of veterans' services. 8 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general 9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much 10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the 11 establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.00 FTE) permanent 12 veterans services counselor IV position in the office of 13 veterans' services to address the various problems and needs of 14 all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans, who 15 served on active duty for the full period they were activated. 16 **17** The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of defense for the purposes of this Act. 18

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

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INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 26 2016

H.B. NO.1489

Report Title:

Office of Veterans' Services; Veterans Services Counselor IV; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the establishment of a veterans services counselor IV position within the Office of Veterans' Services to assist all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans.

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