
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND THE UNITED STATES
SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR A REPORT ON VETERANS'
ACCESS TO MEDICAL MARIJUANA.

1 WHEREAS, the men and women in the armed forces in America
2 are willing to risk their lives defending our freedom,
3 demonstrating great courage and commitment to this country; and
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5 WHEREAS, these brave defenders of democracy face tremendous
6 pressure and are exposed to traumatic events that can negatively
7 affect their mental health; and
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9 WHEREAS, one of the most challenging mental health issues
10 that many veterans must address is posttraumatic stress disorder
11 (PTSD), which can result in night terrors, insomnia, feelings of
12 emptiness, unusual bouts of anger or irritability and a general
13 loss of interest in activities that they used to enjoy; and
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15 WHEREAS, approximately 20% of the veterans returning from
16 recent wars have been diagnosed as suffering from posttraumatic
17 stress disorder and nearly 300,000 veterans have been diagnosed
18 with PTSD according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA);
19 and
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21 WHEREAS, the number of veterans that may be suffering from
22 PTSD is likely much greater than 300,000 as many veterans may
23 not report their symptoms, and are thus not formally diagnosed
24 nor receiving any treatment; and
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26 WHEREAS, large numbers of veterans are self-medicating
27 their PTSD with marijuana because they feel it is more effective
28 in treating their symptoms than medications they have been
29 prescribed by physicians; and
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1 WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' psychiatrists
2 are not able to prescribe medical marijuana to veterans because
3 it is a Schedule 1 substance and as such, VA psychiatrists are
4 not authorized to prescribe it or even to fill out a
5 registration card; and

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7 WHEREAS, the primary care physicians for many, if not most,
8 veterans are part of the VA system; and

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10 WHEREAS, some doctors, such as Dr. Raphael Mechoulam, have
11 studied the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes in treating
12 PTSD and found that it helps with "memory extinction"; and

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14 WHEREAS, "memory extinction" is the positive side of memory
15 loss that occurs from smoking cannabis which, for veterans, is
16 helpful because it causes a break in the association they have
17 formed between traumatic events and other stimulation that set
18 off their PTSD; and

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20 WHEREAS, there are many states that have approved the use
21 of medical marijuana for the treatment of PTSD including:
22 California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Mexico and Oregon;
23 and

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25 WHEREAS, strains of marijuana have been developed in Israel
26 that have markedly elevated levels of specific pharmacologically
27 active substances such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC),
28 cannabinoid and cannabinoids (CBDs); and

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30 WHEREAS, availability of these different strains would
31 potentially facilitate the care of both veterans and nonveterans
32 with PTSD and other disorders; and

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34 WHEREAS, nonveterans who are certified for medical
35 marijuana use may have difficulty growing their own marijuana
36 and may benefit from being able to purchase medical marijuana;
37 and

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39 WHEREAS, growing cooperatives are allowed by law in
40 California; and



1 WHEREAS, if the classification of marijuana changes from a
2 Schedule 1 drug to a Schedule 2 drug, VA doctors can treat
3 veterans suffering from PTSD with medical marijuana without
4 fearing consequences from the Drug Enforcement Administration
5 (DEA), which currently might include losing their jobs, their
6 licenses or even facing criminal charges; and
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8 WHEREAS, the stress of growing their own marijuana may
9 exacerbate the symptoms of PTSD and other anxiety disorders in
10 veterans; and
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12 WHEREAS, homelessness is a huge and growing problem in
13 Hawaii and veterans are disproportionately represented among the
14 homeless; and
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16 WHEREAS, cooperatives could and perhaps should be
17 established for homeless veterans to both live in and grow
18 marijuana to treat their mental health issues; and
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20 WHEREAS, allowing veterans to grow marijuana in groups or
21 cooperatives would provide for social support, housing and a
22 source of income; and
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24 WHEREAS, veterans who live on these rural cooperatives can
25 grow or raise much of their own food in addition to growing
26 marijuana; and
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28 WHEREAS, there is a "Veterans to Farmers" training program
29 being developed at the University of Hawaii in Hilo to help
30 veterans through both hands-on training for growing food and
31 through classroom curriculum on business management; and
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33 WHEREAS, the "Veterans to Farmers" program can be a
34 reference point for creating the veterans cooperative laid out
35 in this resolution; and
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37 WHEREAS, it might be beneficial for the cooperatives to:

- 38 (1) Be set up in rural or agricultural areas;
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40 (2) Be exempt from requiring special permits;
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- (3) Allow for multiple dwellings on the agricultural parcels to provide home for veterans, including housing for homeless veterans; and
- (4) Give the veterans living on these cooperatives the ability to grow their own food in addition to marijuana; and
- (5) The ability to sell extra marijuana to other veterans and non-veterans who are appropriately registered; and
- (6) The ability to receive individual and group therapy onsite; and
- (7) Possibly incorporate a care home and a hospice facility for veterans on the facility; and
- (8) Allow for multiple homes on the property which will enhance the safety and security of the collective now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014, that this body asks the Department of Health, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Hawaii State Department of Agriculture, the School of Pharmacy at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, the John A. Burns School of Medicine, Tripler Military Hospital and other appropriate stakeholders each to submit a report of their respective findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature, not later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2015, with regards to:

- (1) The enactment and implementation of federal legislation to:
 - (A) Facilitate veterans' access to medical marijuana for the treatment of PTSD and other severe anxiety disorders; and

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(B) Enable physicians with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to prescribe medical marijuana to Veterans; and

(2) The most effective methods, and the procedures necessary, to establish cooperatives where homeless veterans may live and grow marijuana for medical purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health and the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs



H.R. NO. 189

Richard King

OFFERED BY:

MAR 07 2014

