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## 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.

14           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



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."

11 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.



1           The legislature finds that one way to help address the  
2 various problems and needs of veterans is to establish and fully  
3 fund a veterans services counselor IV position within the office  
4 of veterans' services to assist all veterans, with a primary  
5 focus on female veterans who served on active duty.

6           The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the  
7 establishment of one full-time permanent veterans services  
8 counselor IV position in the office of veterans' services.

9           SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$           or so much  
11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the  
12 establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.00 FTE) permanent  
13 veterans services counselor IV position in the office of  
14 veterans' services to address the various problems and needs of  
15 all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans, who  
16 served on active duty for the full period they were activated.

17           The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
18 defense for the purposes of this Act.



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

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INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 26 2016

# H.B. NO. 2489

**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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