

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 713
By Overbey

A RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to enact legislation providing for health care coverage for all members of the National Guard.

WHEREAS, the United States of America is founded on the principle of citizen-soldiers safeguarding our national security, a construct that is as essential today as it was more than 368 years ago when the National Guard was established; and

WHEREAS, the oldest military institution in the United States, the National Guard has been, since its founding in 1636, a community-based force composed of citizen-soldiers; the members of the Army and Air National Guard serve the nation in time of war and their states in time of domestic emergency; and

WHEREAS, as our nation continues to fight the War on Terrorism and our military forces continue to be engaged in operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, we are, more than ever, dependent on the National Guard to defend the United States, both overseas and at home; and

WHEREAS, more than 197,000 soldiers of the Army National Guard and 31,000 members of the Air National Guard have been mobilized since September 11, 2001, the largest mobilization of the National Guard since World War II; and

WHEREAS, at this time, more than 51,000 Army Guardsmen are on the ground in Iraq and 15,000 are serving in Afghanistan; sadly, more than 100 National Guard members have made the ultimate sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, whether serving in the Iraq and Afghanistan theaters or at home in the U.S., National Guard members are operating side-by-side with their active-duty counterparts; and

WHEREAS, with a presence in more than 3,000 communities across the nation, the National Guard is also playing a crucial role in homeland security; and

WHEREAS, the "Guard and Reserve Readiness and Retention Act of 2005" (S. 337/H.R. 558) is currently pending before the 109th United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, in part, this legislation extends TRICARE coverage, on a contributory basis, to all members of the National Guard, regardless of mobilization status; TRICARE is the managed health care system for the U.S. military; and

WHEREAS, in light of their expanded role in military operations overseas and national security at home in our post-911 society, a re-evaluation of our nation's commitment to the citizen-soldiers of the National Guard is in order; and

WHEREAS, these brave men and women deserve more than our thanks; they deserve more substantial personnel and readiness benefits - benefits ensuring the National Guard will continue to attract the best and brightest, from the active-duty component of the military as well as the civilian population; and

WHEREAS, the provision of adequate health care coverage to the each and every citizen-soldier of the National Guard would repay but a small portion of our nation's debt to these exceptional men and women who are vigilantly defending our homeland, both at home and abroad; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this Body hereby most respectfully urges the United States Congress to enact the "Guard and Reserve Readiness and Retention Act of 2005" (S. 337/H.R. 558 of the 109th U.S. Congress) or similar legislation extending military health care (TRICARE) coverage, on a contributory basis, to all members of the National Guard, regardless of mobilization status.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this General Assembly most fervently urges and encourages the Tennessee Congressional delegation to utilize their respective powers and influence to the fullest extent possible to secure the passage of the "Guard and Reserve Readiness and Retention Act of 2005" (S. 337/H.R. 558 of the 109th U.S. Congress) or similar legislation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Speaker and the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives; the President and the Secretary of the U.S. Senate; and to each member of the Tennessee Congressional delegation.