

**CHAPTER 83****(SB 80)**

AN ACT relating to the military.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 2 IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

***July 1 of each year is designated as Kentucky Retired Veterans Day.***

Section 2. WHEREAS, the National Guard and Reserve play a major role in defending our nation; currently in the Global War on Terrorism, over 183,000 National Guard and Reserve personnel are mobilized; many U.S. troops stationed in Iraq are Reserve and Guard members facing front-line dangers; and

WHEREAS, since September 11, 2001, the Kentucky Army National Guard has mobilized approximately 5,000 soldiers, and most served for a twelve month period; the Air National Guard has had over 1,000 airmen on orders; the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard has deployed approximately 77% of its total force, 80% of Air and 74% of Army, in the Global War on Terrorism; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Guard has deployed more troops and for a longer period of time for the Global War on Terrorism than at any time since World War II; some members of the Kentucky National Guard have been mobilized more than once; and

WHEREAS, the brave members of the Kentucky National Guard have answered the call to duty by selflessly serving the people of the Commonwealth and America with dedication and honor; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky members of the Armed Forces Reserves are committed, highly skilled, and stand ready to serve our nation; and

WHEREAS, National Guard and Reserve members are only covered by federal health insurance for a short period from the time they are activated to the time they are deployed; and

WHEREAS, the health of the men and women of the Guard and Reserve is crucial to military readiness and their success on their assignments; nationally, thousands of members of the Reserves and National Guard have been unable to deploy due to medical problems; and

WHEREAS, those who are serving the citizens of the Commonwealth and America deserve to have proper medical treatment before, during, and after deployment for service; and

WHEREAS, members of the Kentucky National Guard and Kentucky Reservists are currently making sacrifices; the Commonwealth of Kentucky, which owes a debt of gratitude to each, should also make a contribution to this effort.

Section 3. The Legislative Research Commission shall establish a Task Force on National Guard and Reservists Medical Care. The task force shall examine medical and dental care for Kentucky National Guard and Reservists in times of mobilization through deployment including but not limited to the following:

(1) An identification of health insurance programs available to National Guard and Reservists before, during, and after a call to active duty and the acceptance of this insurance by medical providers throughout the state;

(2) An examination of any state funds available to supplement care before the members are deployed, creation of such fund, and cost to the state;

(3) An identification of military mobilization readiness issues relating to having each member ready to be deployed regarding medical and dental care;

(4) An identification of follow-up care procedures upon return from an assignment;

(5) An identification of advisable statutory and programmatic changes and other strategies to aid in the health aspect of readiness of Guard and Reserve members in periods of mobilization through deployment; and

(6) The task force shall collect data on the number of National Guard and Reserve members from Kentucky who have not been medically ready at the time of deployment since September 11, 2001.

Section 4. The task force shall be composed of fourteen members and shall include:

(1) Three members of the House of Representatives. Two of the members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House. One of the members shall be appointed by the Minority floor leader;

(2) Three members of the Senate. Two of the members shall be appointed by the President. One of the members shall be appointed by the Minority floor leader;

(3) The Adjutant General of the Department of Military Affairs, or a designee;

(4) One representative from the Enlisted Association National Guard of Kentucky, appointed by the Legislative Research Commission;

(5) One representative of the National Guard Association of Kentucky, appointed by the Legislative Research Commission;

(6) One representative of the Kentucky Reserve Officer Association, appointed by the Legislative Research Commission;

(7) One representative of the Kentucky Reserve Enlisted Association, appointed by the Legislative Research Commission;

(8) The Kentucky Army National Guard State Surgeon, or a designee;

(9) The Kentucky Air National Guard State Surgeon, or a designee; and

(10) One representative of the Kentucky Medical Association, appointed by the Legislative Research Commission.

The Legislative Research Commission shall appoint the co-chairs of the task force from among the legislative members on the task force.

Section 5. Upon approval of the Legislative Research Commission, the task force may begin meeting after the appointment of its members.

Section 6. The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the appropriate committee or committees no later than December 1, 2005.

Section 7. Provisions of this Resolution to the contrary notwithstanding, the Legislative Research Commission shall have the authority to alternatively assign the issues identified herein to an interim joint committee or subcommittee thereof, and to designate a study completion date.

**Approved March 16, 2005.**