

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 212**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 5, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman HAROLD "HAL" J. WIRTHS

District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER

District 28 (Essex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Space, Assemblywoman Dunn and Assemblyman Bergen

SYNOPSIS

Urges federal Department of Veterans Affairs to establish Vet Center in Northwestern New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/8/2021)

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging the federal Department of
2 Veterans Affairs to establish a Vet Center in Northwestern New
3 Jersey.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, Veterans in the State of New Jersey deserve high quality
6 and accessible mental health care; and
7 **WHEREAS**, The United States has a long history of providing
8 assistance to veterans, beginning in the colonial era; and
9 **WHEREAS**, During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed a
10 law to establish a national soldiers and sailors asylum, creating the
11 blueprint for future VA hospitals; and
12 **WHEREAS**, In 1917, the United States Congress established a new
13 system for veterans benefits, expanding services and providing
14 soldiers returning from World War I with access to newly
15 established hospitals that specifically addressed the needs of
16 veterans; and
17 **WHEREAS**, After World War II, the population of veterans increased,
18 leading the United States Congress to enact new benefits for
19 veterans and to the modernization of the VA; and
20 **WHEREAS**, In 1979, the United States Congress recognized the mental
21 health needs of veterans who had returned from Vietnam and
22 created Vet Centers to provide mental health and readjustment
23 services to veterans; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Vet Centers provide a broad range of counseling, outreach,
25 and referral services to eligible veterans in order to help the veteran
26 make a successful readjustment to civilian life; and
27 **WHEREAS**, Vet Centers provide veterans, service members, and their
28 families with readjustment counseling including individual and
29 group counseling, family counseling, bereavement counseling,
30 military sexual trauma counseling and referral, and substance abuse
31 assessment and referral, and with other medical and social services
32 to assist veterans; and
33 **WHEREAS**, Separate from VA sites to ensure confidentiality of
34 services and easy access to care, Vet Centers are located within the
35 community to best serve veterans, service members, and their
36 families; and
37 **WHEREAS**, There are currently five Vet Centers in New Jersey, none
38 of which are located in the northwestern part of the State; and
39 **WHEREAS**, As of September 30, 2020, the United States Department
40 of Veterans Affairs has estimated that about 40,000 veterans reside
41 in Morris, Sussex, Warren, and Hunterdon counties; and
42 **WHEREAS**, The lack of a Vet Center in the northwestern part of the
43 State creates a burden on veterans, service members, and their
44 families who are forced to travel long distances or travel out of
45 State to receive much needed mental health services; now,
46 therefore,

ACR212 WIRTHS, TUCKER

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1 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
2 *Jersey (the Senate concurring):*

1. The Legislature of the State of New Jersey respectfully urges the federal Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a Vet Center in Northwestern New Jersey.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the Director of the Veterans Affairs New Jersey Health Care System, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and every member of Congress from this State.

STATEMENT

17 This resolution urges the federal Department of Veterans Affairs
18 to establish a Vet Center in Northwestern New Jersey. The United
19 States has a long history of providing services to veterans,
20 beginning in colonial times and services available to veterans have
21 continued to evolve with time. First established in 1979, Vet
22 Centers offer community-based counseling and a wide range of
23 social and psychological services. There are five Vet Centers in the
24 State of New Jersey, none of which are located in the northwestern
25 part of the State.

As of September 30, 2020, there were approximately 40,000 veterans residing in Morris, Sussex, Warren, and Hunterdon counties. Those veterans travel long distances or out-of-state to receive mental health care. The veterans' community in Sussex, Warren, Morris, and Hunterdon Counties has identified the need for an additional Vet Center in Northwestern New Jersey, which would help service the needs of New Jersey veterans, service members, and their families.