

# State of South Dakota

## EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2009

822Q0701

### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Introduced by: Senators Heidepriem, Gillespie, Knudson, and Miles and Representatives Nygaard, Blake, Elliott, Fargen, Frerichs, Iron Cloud III, Killer, Solberg, and Vanderlinde

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Supporting a study of the potential creation of a  
2 Department of Veterans Affairs as a cabinet-level department.

3 WHEREAS, the State of South Dakota has more than 74,000 veterans in the state; and

4 WHEREAS, the veterans of South Dakota generate more than \$352 million from earned  
5 federal benefits into the South Dakota economy; and

6 WHEREAS, the Division of Veterans Affairs implements programs and services that have  
7 the potential of affecting more than 74,000 living veterans and more than 185,000 dependents  
8 and survivors of such veterans; and

9 WHEREAS, the current Division of Veterans Affairs is responsible for the successful  
10 operation of the claims office located at the VA Regional Office in Sioux Falls, veterans  
11 educational and job training programs, and the training and administration of county/tribal  
12 veterans service officers. In addition, the division works closely with the operation of the  
13 Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota State Veterans Home; and

14 WHEREAS, the veterans of this state should have an avenue of access to the executive



1 branch of state government commensurate with the sacrifices they have made for our country  
2 in time of peace and in time of war; and

3 WHEREAS, it has been proposed that the Division of Veterans Affairs, the principal state  
4 agency charged with providing benefits and services to veterans and their dependents and  
5 survivors, be elevated to a department with cabinet-level status:

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Eighty-fourth Legislature  
7 of the State of South Dakota, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the  
8 Legislature supports a study to evaluate the feasibility and advisability of creating an  
9 independent cabinet-level agency to address veterans affairs, which would allow the veterans  
10 of South Dakota the same oversight and consideration as other state departments.