



HR0726

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1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Veterans of the United States Armed Forces have
3 dedicated themselves to serving this country with honor and
4 distinction; they deserve our deepest respect and gratitude,
5 and the State of Illinois should therefore offer the highest
6 level of care to veterans; and

7 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois operates four veterans'
8 homes whose purpose is to provide quality long-term care,
9 health services, and a supportive environment to veterans and
10 their spouses; and

11 WHEREAS, Since August 2015, 13 residents of the Illinois
12 Veteran's Home at Quincy have died from Legionnaires' disease,
13 and at least 61 residents and staff have contracted the
14 illness; and

15 WHEREAS, The first confirmed case of Legionnaires' disease
16 was found at the Illinois Veteran's Home at Quincy on July 24,
17 2015; and

18 WHEREAS, According to the Illinois Department of Veterans'
19 Affairs (IDVA) Director Erica Jeffries, the Illinois Veteran's
20 Home at Quincy implemented procedures to control the outbreak
21 on August 21, 2015; and

1 WHEREAS, The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
2 notified the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
3 on August 23, 2015 of five confirmed cases of Legionnaires'
4 disease; and

5 WHEREAS, A Veterans' Affairs spokesperson emailed Governor
6 Rauner's office about the outbreak on August 24, 2015, and the
7 staff had internal discussions over email about the outbreak;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Melvin Tucker, a decorated Army Air Corps veteran
10 from World War II contracted a fever at the Illinois Veteran's
11 Home at Quincy on August 21, 2015; he was given Tylenol, but as
12 of August 27 had not been tested for Legionnaires' disease or
13 given antibiotics, despite the eight confirmed cases of the
14 disease; Tucker was finally tested and confirmed to have
15 Legionnaires' disease, but passed away on August 31, 2015; and

16 WHEREAS, Gerald Kuhn, a former United States Army Sergeant
17 and World War II veteran, also fell ill during that time
18 period; he ran a fever and was given Tylenol; Kuhn was also not
19 immediately tested for Legionnaires' disease; he was taken to
20 the hospital three days later at his own request, after running
21 a 104 degree fever; he passed away on August 31, 2015; and

1 WHEREAS, Dolores French, resident and wife of United States
2 Army Korean War veteran Richard French Sr., was found dead in
3 her room on August 29, 2015 from Legionnaires' disease; she had
4 died several days earlier, but the staff was unaware of her
5 death; when her son called on August 28 after reading the press
6 release about the outbreak, they told him that she was doing
7 well; and

8 WHEREAS, After 12 deaths and at least 39 confirmed
9 illnesses in 2015, the Illinois Veteran's Home at Quincy had a
10 second outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in 2016, which led to
11 six more illnesses; and

12 WHEREAS, Another outbreak arose in the fall of 2017, during
13 which three more residents became ill, one of whom died,
14 raising the death total to 13 since 2015; and

15 WHEREAS, Eleven families are suing the State for
16 negligence, and there have been calls for investigation into
17 the actions of the Illinois Veteran's Home at Quincy, the
18 Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Illinois
19 Department of Public Health, and the Governor's Office, as to
20 whether they could have better handled the outbreak and
21 treatment of the residents, and whether they should have
22 publicized the outbreak earlier in order to afford families the
23 best chance to help their loved ones; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
2 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
3 Governor Rauner's administration has not made this a top
4 priority and 13 deaths over a two year period is unacceptable;
5 we urge the Director of Public Health, the Director of
6 Veterans' Affairs, and Governor Rauner's administration to
7 provide a comprehensive report to the General Assembly two
8 weeks after the adoption of this resolution that includes
9 detailed timelines of what information each of these agencies
10 knew, and when they knew it, with regard to the Legionnaires'
11 disease outbreak at the Illinois Veteran's Home at Quincy; this
12 report should also include a detailed proposal on how to
13 contain the spread of and end the outbreaks of Legionnaires'
14 disease at this facility in the future; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That we urge Governor Rauner's administration to
16 immediately make this a top priority; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
18 delivered to Governor Rauner, the Illinois Department of Public
19 Health, and the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.