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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**EIGHTY-SIXTH
SESSION**

HOUSE FILE No. 2917

February 11, 2010

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs

1.1 A resolution

1.2 relating to payment of the Federal Respite Leave Benefit for members of the 1st
1.3 of the 34th Brigade of the Minnesota National Guard who served in Iraq during
1.4 the Troop Surge of 2007.

1.5 WHEREAS, various units of the Minnesota's National Guard have served honorably in
1.6 multiple peacekeeping and military combat deployments before and since September 11, 2001;
1.7 and

1.8 WHEREAS, the order for deployment of the 1st of the 34th Infantry Brigade of the
1.9 Minnesota National Guard ordered the members of the Brigade into federal active military service
1.10 under Title 10 U.S.C. for a period of 18 months; and

1.11 WHEREAS, approximately 2,700 members of the 1st of the 34th Brigade who were
1.12 deployed for the War in Iraq during 2007 had their deployment extended by the United States
1.13 Department of Defense up to an additional four months in response to the troop surge in Iraq
1.14 ordered by President George W. Bush; and

1.15 WHEREAS, as a result of that Presidential order, the United States Government through its
1.16 Department of Defense promised to pay a respite leave benefit to each of those soldiers valued at
1.17 approximately \$200 per day; and

1.18 WHEREAS, for 2,513 of those 1st of the 34th Brigade soldiers, this benefit has yet to be
1.19 paid by the United States Government; and

1.20 WHEREAS, the cumulative benefit owed these soldiers for this benefit is approximately
1.21 \$10,000,000; and

2.1 WHEREAS, the United States Congress enacted legislation on October 28, 2009,
2.2 authorizing the service secretaries to implement the respite leave benefit program for those
2.3 deserving service members; and

2.4 WHEREAS, the current economic and employment situation facing all returning veterans
2.5 is quite challenging; and

2.6 WHEREAS, in order to return all the way home, the veterans of the 1st of the 34th Brigade
2.7 deserve and need the benefits promised to them by the United States Government; NOW,
2.8 THEREFORE,

2.9 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the State of Minnesota that it urges
2.10 the Secretary of Defense and other responsible federal government officials to promptly issue
2.11 implementation guidance that will allow our Minnesota service members to submit their claims to
2.12 receive these benefits that they have been officially promised by the United States Government
2.13 and which they so honorably earned in combat.

2.14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives is
2.15 directed to prepare copies of this resolution, to be authenticated by his signature and that of
2.16 the Speaker, and transmit them to Minnesota's Senators and Representatives in Congress, the
2.17 Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.