

Senators Gilbert, Garcia, Patterson, Kuipers, Birkholz, Allen, Van Woerkom and Cropsey offered the following concurrent resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 21.

A concurrent resolution to memorialize Congress to include funding for the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services in the National Defense Authorization Act and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2004.

Whereas, For over a century, the American Red Cross has served as a link between the people of the United States and their Armed Forces; and

Whereas, Under its Congressional Charter of 1905, the American Red Cross is entrusted to deliver emergency messages to members of the Armed Forces and their families; and

Whereas, Military commanders around the world rely on the Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES) to verify the need to approve leave for military personnel, and to provide financial support to enable them to return home when necessary; and

Whereas, In order to meet the Department of Defense requirements for emergency leave verification, Red Cross AFES is on call every hour of every day and night for 13 million service members and their families; and

Whereas, The Red Cross AFES program maintains a global emergency communications network supported by 392 employees and 28,000 volunteers located in 961 chapters across the nation, on 108 military installations around the world, and at two AFES Centers located at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and Falls Church, Virginia; and

Whereas, Michigan's 26 Red Cross chapters and its work on three installations provided emergency communications assistance to 6,238 military personnel and their families in Fiscal Year 2002. Since last July, the American Red Cross in Michigan has seen a 43% increase in the number of military cases served over last year; and

Whereas, Operation Enduring Freedom, the war on terrorism, and the Iraq conflict have placed increased demands on this vital program. The Red Cross and Congress can no longer rely on charitable contributions from the American public to support this required service, especially during the current economic downturn; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representative concurring), That we memorialize Congress to include funding for the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services in the National Defense Authorization Act and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2004 to help fund costs associated with AFES emergency communications and staff mobilization and deployment. We also support the inclusion of AFES funding in the Department of Defense budget request starting in fiscal year 2005; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.