

**NINETY-SIXTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Charlotte, North Carolina
August 26, 27, 28, 2014**

Resolution No. 288: Department of Veterans Affairs Involvement in the Department of Homeland Security

Origin: Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Department of Homeland Security provides a single source of authority, at the highest level, for all homeland defense programs and policies; and

WHEREAS, The role of the Department of Homeland Security is to coordinate national strategy to strengthen protection against terrorist threats or attacks; and

WHEREAS, One of the critical missions of the Department of Homeland Security is emergency preparedness and response “to minimize the damage and recover from future terrorist attacks”; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical system serves as a primary back-up to the Department of Defense (DOD) in the event of military casualties; and

WHEREAS, VA and DOD have a Contingency Hospital System Plan as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and

WHEREAS, VA is prepared to augment the DOD’s network of hospital and health care facilities in the event of a crisis, with 155 medical centers and a significant medical staff, many of whom are veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA also acts as a federal support organization during major disasters, as one of four partners in the National Disaster Medical System; and

WHEREAS, VA provided medical and psychological support to those in need during the months following the September 11, 2001, attack; and

WHEREAS, VA also maintains radiological response teams and decontamination systems should radioactive materials ever be used; and

WHEREAS, VA manages the largest health care program and is the largest medical education and health professional training program in the United States; and

WHEREAS, VA is a federal presence in virtually every local community in the country; and

WHEREAS, VA has the ability to move health care professionals to the site of a disaster and provide medical care quickly and efficiently; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the contingency plan for disasters developed by VA and DOD should be integrated as a part of the primary health care procedures of homeland security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 26, 27, 28, 2014, That The American Legion urge Congress and the Administration to include the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in all strategic planning of the Department of Homeland Security; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Congress takes into account any additional requirements of VA as a result of involvement in homeland security obligations when developing VA’s annual budget.