

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. Summary of the Recommendation

The recommendation requests that the ABA:

Urge Congress to enact legislation, like the Veterans Advocacy Act of 2007(SB 1569), which promotes the provision of legal services to veterans and members of the Armed Forces to assist them in obtaining the full range of health care, benefits and services to which they are lawfully entitled.

### 2. Summary of the Issue that the Resolution Addresses

As set forth in the report to the resolution, the Veterans Advocacy Act of 2007 establishes a pilot program which will provide 10 grants of up to \$100,000 each to qualified and eligible entities for the provision legal services to assist veterans and members of the Armed Services to receive the full range of health care, benefits, and services for which they are eligible.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, would carry out the pilot program through the award by a designated panel of 10 grants of up to \$100,000 each for:

(A) the provision of legal services at no cost to members of the Armed Forces and veterans; or

(B) the provision of legal training to attorneys on the health and benefits programs of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Within a year of full implementation of the pilot program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs must submit a report on its success to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

### 3. Please Explain How the Proposed Policy Position Will Address the Issue

By urging passage of the Veterans Advocacy Act of 2007, the ABA will be promoting the enhanced provision of pro bono legal services and zealous advocacy to veterans to assist them in obtaining the full range of benefits for which they are eligible.

4. Summary of Minority Views

While the benefits of this Act would be felt by military personnel who have proudly served our country, there are several positions taken in opposition to this bill:

1. Attorneys will make the process unnecessarily adversarial;
2. The process will actually become more inefficient due to the attorney training that will be necessary;
3. Without counsel on both sides, settling claims will be difficult;
4. The costs associated with involving attorneys in the process will be too great.