

Senate Resolution 276

By: Senators Unterman of the 45th, Miller of the 49th and Parent of the 42nd

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging Congress to eliminate the five-month waiting period for disability insurance benefits
2 for individuals living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS); and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is commonly known as Lou Gehrig's
4 disease; and

5 WHEREAS, ALS is a progressive and fatal neuromuscular disease; and

6 WHEREAS, the average time to diagnosis is more than 12 months; and

7 WHEREAS, the majority of ALS patients die within two to five years of receiving a
8 diagnosis; and

9 WHEREAS, approximately 6,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with ALS each
10 year; and

11 WHEREAS, the incidence of ALS is two per 100,000 people, and it is estimated that more
12 than 20,000 Americans may be living with ALS at any given time; and

13 WHEREAS, ALS occurs through the world with no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic
14 boundaries and can affect anyone; and

15 WHEREAS, military veterans are approximately twice as likely to develop ALS; and

16 WHEREAS, the onset of ALS often involves muscle weakness or stiffness as early
17 symptoms. Progression of weakness, wasting, and paralysis of the muscles of the limbs and
18 trunk, as well as those that control vital functions such as speech, swallowing, and later
19 breathing, generally follows; and

20 WHEREAS, there can be significant costs for medical care, equipment, and home health
21 caregiving later in the disease; and

22 WHEREAS, under current law, individuals must wait five months after becoming disabled
23 before their Social Security Disability Insurance benefit payments can begin; and

24 WHEREAS, last year, Congress considered legislation that would eliminate the five-month
25 waiting period for disability insurance benefits for individuals with ALS, but it unfortunately
26 did not become law; and

27 WHEREAS, this body recognizes that persons living with ALS cannot wait for benefits.

28 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that this body urges Congress
29 to eliminate the five-month waiting period for disability insurance benefits for individuals
30 living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
32 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the President of the
33 United States Senate, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and to
34 each member of the Congressional delegation from this state.