

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1318

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility in Far South Texas, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 1, 2011

Mr. CUELLAR (for himself, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. FARENTHOLD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility in Far South Texas, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “South Texas Veterans
5 Health Care Expansion Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The current and future health care needs of
9 veterans residing in the Far South Texas area are

1 not being fully met by the Department of Veterans
2 Affairs.

3 (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs esti-
4 mates that more than 117,000 veterans reside in
5 Far South Texas.

6 (3) The 2010 census identified Far South
7 Texas as the fastest growing region in the State of
8 Texas. According to figures obtained from the
9 United States Army Accessions Command, Texas is
10 the number one source of military recruits among all
11 States. Texas is also the largest provider of National
12 Guard and Reserve members to current overseas
13 military deployments. These factors make it a cer-
14 tainty that the veteran population in Far South
15 Texas will increase substantially in the coming
16 years.

17 (4) In its Capital Asset Realignment for En-
18 hanced Services study, the Department of Veterans
19 Affairs found that fewer than three percent of its
20 enrollees in the Valley-Coastal Bend Market of Vet-
21 erans Integrated Service Network 17 reside within
22 its acute hospital access standards.

23 (5) Travel times for veterans from the market
24 referred to in paragraph (3) can exceed six hours
25 from their residences to the nearest Department of

1 Veterans Affairs hospital for acute inpatient health
2 care.

3 (6) Even with the significant travel times, vet-
4 erans from Far South Texas demonstrate a high de-
5 mand for health care services from the Department
6 of Veterans Affairs.

7 (7) Current deployments involving members of
8 the Texas National Guard and Reservists from
9 Texas will continue to increase demand for medical
10 services provided by the Department of Veterans Af-
11 fairs.

12 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF CONSTRUCTION OF DEPART-**
13 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MED-**
14 **ICAL FACILITY IN FAR SOUTH TEXAS.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
16 shall include in the Strategic Capital Investment Plan of
17 the Department of Veterans Affairs a project to expand
18 the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility in Far
19 South Texas, by adding to the facility the following:

20 (1) An urgent care center.

21 (2) Inpatient capability for 50 beds with appro-
22 priate administrative, clinical, diagnostic, and ancil-
23 lary services needed for support.

24 (3) The capability to provide a full range of
25 services to meet the need of female veterans.

1 (4) The capability to provide caregiver support
2 services, including an adult day care providing care-
3 giver respite.

4 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
5 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans
6 Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-
7 fairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report
8 identifying and outlining the detailed estimate of the cost
9 of and time necessary for completion of the project author-
10 ized under subsection (a).

11 (c) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this Act, the term
12 “Far South Texas” means the following counties of the
13 State of Texas: Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Calhoun, Cameron,
14 DeWitt, Dimmit, Duval, Goliad, Hidalgo, Jackson, Jim
15 Hogg, Jim Wells, Kennedy, Kleberg, Nueces, Refugio, San
16 Patricio, Starr, Victoria, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata.

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