

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3216

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an ophthalmologic service and Director of Ophthalmologic Services in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 14, 2011

Mr. BENISHEK (for himself and Mr. BILIRAKIS) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an ophthalmologic service and Director of Ophthalmologic Services in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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 “VHA Ophthalmologic
5 Service Establishment Act of 2011”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Ocular injuries during war have steadily in-
2 creased from 2 percent in the Civil War to 16 per-
3 cent in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation
4 Iraqi Freedom.

5 (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs has re-
6 ported 46,000 eye trauma injuries, including mild,
7 moderate, and severe cases, as of December 2010.

8 (3) Large numbers of returning veterans suffer
9 from visual symptoms associated with traumatic
10 brain injury; in fact, approximately 60 to 70 percent
11 of severe and moderate traumatic brain injury cases
12 and 40 percent of mild traumatic brain injury cases
13 include some form of visual impairment.

14 (4) The demand and complexity of eye-care
15 services within the Veterans Health Administration
16 of the Department of Veterans Affairs has increased
17 significantly in recent years.

18 (5) The number of veterans over age 85 is pro-
19 jected to increase by 173 percent by 2020, and as
20 the veteran population served by the Department of
21 Veteran Affairs ages, the demand for eye care is ex-
22 pected to double, increasing the demand for eye care
23 services.

1 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGIC SERVICE**
2 **IN VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGIC SERV-
4 ICE.—Section 7305 of title 38, United States Code, is
5 amended—

6 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (6) and (7) as
7 paragraphs (7) and (8), respectively; and

8 (2) by inserting after paragraph (5) the fol-
9 lowing new paragraph:

10 “(6) An Ophthalmologic Service.”.

11 (b) DIRECTOR.—Paragraph (6) of section 7306(a) of
12 such title is amended by inserting “a Director of Ophthal-
13 mologic Service,” after “Podiatric Service,”.

14 (c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans
15 Affairs shall ensure that an individual is serving as the
16 Director of Ophthalmologic Service under section
17 7306(a)(6) of such title, as amended by subsection (b),
18 by not later than the date that is 120 days after the date
19 of the enactment of this Act.

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