

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3390

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of establishing a polytrauma rehabilitation center or polytrauma network site of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Fort Bayard, New Mexico, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 4, 2011

Mr. PEARCE (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. LUJÁN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of establishing a polytrauma rehabilitation center or polytrauma network site of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Fort Bayard, New Mexico, 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 “Southern New Mexico  
5 and El Paso, Texas, Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury  
6 Care Improvement Act of 2011”.

1 **SEC. 2. REPORT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF POLYTRAUMA RE-**  
2 **HABILITATION CENTER OR POLYTRAUMA**  
3 **NETWORK SITE OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-**  
4 **ERANS AFFAIRS IN FORT BAYARD, NEW MEX-**  
5 **ICO.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-  
7 ings:

8 (1) The military population of the southern  
9 New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, region has grown  
10 greatly since the United States has been involved in  
11 military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and  
12 members of the Armed Forces returning from such  
13 operations to such region will require care at  
14 polytrauma centers as a result of their involvement  
15 with such operations.

16 (2) The population at Fort Bliss in Texas and  
17 New Mexico is expected to grow from 9,300 mem-  
18 bers of the Armed Forces in 2005 to an estimated  
19 33,400 members of the Armed Forces by 2012 be-  
20 cause of the ongoing expansion of Fort Bliss.

21 (3) Traumatic brain injury has become known  
22 as one of the signature wounds of service in the  
23 Armed Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan because of  
24 its high occurrence among veterans of such service.  
25 Many members of the Armed Forces returning to  
26 the El Paso, Texas, and southern New Mexico re-

1       gion from overseas service in the Armed Forces are  
2       expected to suffer from traumatic brain injury or  
3       other forms of injury requiring treatment at a  
4       polytrauma rehabilitation center or polytrauma net-  
5       work site.

6               (4) A recent RAND Corporation study esti-  
7       mates that as many as 20 percent of the veterans  
8       who served in the Armed Forces in Iraq and Af-  
9       ghanistan have a traumatic brain injury as a result  
10      of such service, and many of these veterans require  
11      ongoing care for mild, moderate, or severe traumatic  
12      brain injury.

13              (5) The Department of Veterans Affairs rec-  
14      ommends that all veterans experiencing a polytrau-  
15      matic injury be referred to a polytrauma rehabilita-  
16      tion center or polytrauma network site of the De-  
17      partment.

18              (6) The polytrauma system of care of the De-  
19      partment includes four polytrauma rehabilitation  
20      centers and 21 polytrauma network sites, none of  
21      which are located within 300 miles driving distance  
22      of Fort Bliss, White Sands Missile Range, or Hollo-  
23      man Air Force Base.

24              (7) The large military population in the south-  
25      ern New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, region neces-

1 sitates a new polytrauma rehabilitation center or  
2 polytrauma network site of the Department to deal  
3 with the significant hardships veterans residing in  
4 such region require.

5 (b) REPORT.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
8 retary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress  
9 a report on the feasibility and advisability of estab-  
10 lishing a polytrauma rehabilitation center or poly-  
11 trauma network site of the Department of Veterans  
12 Affairs in Fort Bayard, New Mexico.

13 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The report required by  
14 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

15 (A) An assessment of the adequacy of ex-  
16 isting Department facilities in the southern  
17 New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, region to ad-  
18 dress matters that are otherwise addressed by  
19 polytrauma rehabilitation centers and polytrau-  
20 ma network sites of the Department.

21 (B) A comparative assessment of the effec-  
22 tiveness of rehabilitation programs for individ-  
23 uals with traumatic brain injuries in urban  
24 areas with the effectiveness of such programs

1           for individuals with traumatic brain injuries in  
2           rural and frontier communities.

3           (C) An assessment of whether therapies  
4           that can prevent or remediate the development  
5           of secondary neurologic conditions related to  
6           traumatic brain injury can be interrupted by  
7           stress caused by living in an urban area.

8           (D) The relation of high cost of living to  
9           the recovery of veterans and the impact on their  
10          families in comparison to recovery in an area  
11          where there is a lower cost of living.

12          (3) CONSULTATION.—In preparing the report  
13          required by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall con-  
14          sult with appropriate State and local government  
15          agencies in New Mexico.

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