

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2493

To establish a grant program to encourage the use of assistance dogs by certain members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2015

Mr. MCGOVERN (for himself, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. POCAN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. NEAL, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. TITUS, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. MOORE, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Mr. HONDA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish a grant program to encourage the use of assistance dogs by certain members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

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 “Wounded Warrior
5 Service Dog Act of 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. WOUNDED WARRIOR K-9 CORPS.**

2 (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—Subject to the avail-
3 ability of appropriations provided for such purpose, the
4 Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Af-
5 fairs shall jointly establish a program, to be known as the
6 “K-9 Companion Corps Program”, to award competitive
7 grants to nonprofit organizations to assist such organiza-
8 tions in the planning, designing, establishing, or operating
9 (or any combination thereof) of programs to provide as-
10 sistance dogs to covered members and veterans.

11 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The recipient of a grant
13 under this section shall use the grant to carry out
14 programs that provide assistance dogs to covered
15 members and veterans who have a disability de-
16 scribed in paragraph (2).

17 (2) DISABILITY.—A disability described in this
18 paragraph is any of the following:

19 (A) Blindness or visual impairment.

20 (B) Loss of use of a limb, paralysis, or
21 other significant mobility issues.

22 (C) Loss of hearing.

23 (D) Traumatic brain injury.

24 (E) Post-traumatic stress disorder.

1 (F) Any other disability that the Secretary
2 of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Af-
3 fairs consider appropriate.

4 (3) TIMING OF AWARD.—The Secretaries may
5 not award a grant under this section to reimburse
6 a recipient for costs previously incurred by the re-
7 cipient in carrying out a program to provide assist-
8 ance dogs to covered members and veterans unless
9 the recipient elects for the award to be such a reim-
10 bursement.

11 (c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
12 under this section, a nonprofit organization shall submit
13 an application to the Secretary of Defense and the Sec-
14 retary of Veterans Affairs at such time, in such manner,
15 and containing such information as the Secretary of De-
16 fense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may require.
17 Such application shall include—

18 (1) a proposal for the evaluation required by
19 subsection (d); and

20 (2) a description of—

21 (A) the training that will be provided by
22 the organization to covered members and vet-
23 erans;

24 (B) the training of dogs that will serve as
25 assistance dogs;

1 (C) the aftercare services that the organi-
2 zation will provide for such dogs and covered
3 members and veterans;

4 (D) the plan for publicizing the availability
5 of such dogs through a targeted marketing
6 campaign to covered members and veterans;

7 (E) the recognized expertise of the organi-
8 zation in breeding and training such dogs;

9 (F) the commitment of the organization to
10 comparable standards as that of the Inter-
11 national Guide Dog Federation or Assistance
12 Dogs International;

13 (G) the commitment of the organization to
14 humane standards for animals; and

15 (H) the experience of the organization with
16 working with military medical treatment facili-
17 ties or medical facilities of the Department of
18 Veterans Affairs.

19 (d) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall require each
20 recipient of a grant to use a portion of the funds made
21 available through the grant to conduct an evaluation of
22 the effectiveness of the activities carried out through the
23 grant by such recipient.

24 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

1 (1) ASSISTANCE DOG.—The term “assistance
2 dog” means a dog specifically trained to perform
3 physical tasks to mitigate the effects of a disability
4 described in subsection (b)(2), except that the term
5 does not include a dog specifically trained for com-
6 fort or personal defense.

7 (2) COVERED MEMBERS AND VETERANS.—The
8 term “covered members and veterans” means—

9 (A) with respect to a member of the
10 Armed Forces, such member who is—

11 (i) receiving medical treatment, recu-
12 peration, or therapy under chapter 55 of
13 title 10, United States Code;

14 (ii) in medical hold or medical hold-
15 over status; or

16 (iii) covered under section 1202 or
17 1205 of title 10, United States Code; and

18 (B) with respect to a veteran, a veteran
19 who is enrolled in the health care system estab-
20 lished under section 1705(a) of title 38, United
21 States Code.

22 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act
24 \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

○