

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5516

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 17, 2021

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “VITAL Assessment
3 Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. VETERANS INTEGRATION TO ACADEMIC LEADER-**
5 **SHIP PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF**
6 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

7 (a) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
8 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans
9 Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Af-
10 fairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a
11 report on the Veterans Integration to Academic Leader-
12 ship program of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The
13 report shall include the following:

14 (1) The number of medical centers of the De-
15 partment, institutions of higher learning, non-college
16 degree programs, and student veterans supported by
17 the program, and relevant trends since the program
18 began.

19 (2) The staff and resources allocated to the
20 program, and relevant trends since the program
21 began.

22 (3) An assessment of the outcomes and effec-
23 tiveness of the program in—

24 (A) supporting student veterans;

1 (B) connecting student veterans to needed
2 services of the Department or services provided
3 by non-Department entities;

4 (C) addressing the mental health needs of
5 student veterans;

6 (D) lowering the suicide risk of student
7 veterans; and

8 (E) helping student veterans achieve edu-
9 cational goals.

10 (4) An assessment of barriers to expanding the
11 program and how the Secretary intends to address
12 such barriers.

13 (5) An assessment of whether the program
14 should be expanded outside of the Office of Mental
15 Health and Suicide Prevention to support students
16 veterans with needs unrelated to mental health or
17 suicide.

18 (b) UNIFORM BEST PRACTICES, GOALS, AND MEAS-
19 URES.—The Secretary shall establish best practices, goals,
20 and measures for the Veterans Integration to Academic
21 Leadership program of the Department that are uniform
22 among the medical centers of the Department.

23 (c) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall conduct out-
24 reach among the Armed Forces, veterans service organiza-
25 tions, institutions of higher learning, and non-college de-

1 gree programs with respect to the Veterans Integration
2 to Academic Leadership program of the Department.

3 (d) ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary shall assess the
4 feasibility and advisability of including the suicide rate for
5 student veterans in the National Veteran Suicide Preven-
6 tion Annual Report of the Office of Mental Health and
7 Suicide Prevention of the Department.

8 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) The term “institution of higher learning”
10 has the meaning given that term in section 3452 of
11 title 38, United States Code.

12 (2) The term “student veteran” means the fol-
13 lowing:

14 (A) A veteran or member of the Armed
15 Forces using educational assistance under any
16 of the following provisions of law:

17 (i) Chapter 30, 31, 32, or 33 of title
18 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606
19 or 1607 of title 10, United States Code.

20 (ii) Section 116 of the Harry W.
21 Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance
22 Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–48; 38
23 U.S.C. 3001 note).

1 (iii) Section 8006 of the American
2 Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law
3 117–2; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note prec.).

4 (B) A veteran who is enrolled in an institu-
5 tion of higher learning or other training pro-
6 gram, without regard to whether the veteran is
7 using educational assistance specified in sub-
8 paragraph (A).

Passed the House of Representatives November 16,
2021.

Attest: CHERYL L. JOHNSON,
Clerk.