

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3194

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on mental health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs in certain States and a report on funding by Vet Centers of marketing and outreach.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 4, 2021

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. COTTON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on mental health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs in certain States and a report on funding by Vet Centers of marketing and outreach.

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 “Vet Center Support
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
 2 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
 3 gress” means the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of
 4 the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
 5 of the House of Representatives.

6 (2) COVERED STATE.—The term “covered
 7 State” means each State (including the District of
 8 Columbia, Puerto Rico, and any territory or posses-
 9 sion of the United States) that has a ratio of one
 10 or fewer Vet Centers per 100,000 or more veterans
 11 who reside in such State (as such population is de-
 12 termined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, act-
 13 ing through the National Center for Veterans Anal-
 14 ysis and Statistics, for fiscal year 2021).

15 (3) VET CENTER.—The term “Vet Center”—
 16 (A) has the meaning given that term in
 17 section 1712A of title 38, United States Code;
 18 (B) includes Vet Center outstations; and
 19 (C) does not include mobile Vet Centers.

20 **SEC. 3. REPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH CARE FURNISHED BY**
 21 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN**
 22 **CERTAIN STATES.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
 24 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
 25 erans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees

1 of Congress a report regarding mental health care fur-
2 nished by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans
3 in each covered State.

4 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report under subsection (a)
5 shall include, with respect to each covered State, the fol-
6 lowing:

7 (1) An assessment of the ability of the Depart-
8 ment to furnish to veterans in such State—

9 (A) readjustment counseling;

10 (B) therapy for post-traumatic stress dis-
11 order and other trauma-related therapy;

12 (C) group counseling;

13 (D) marriage and family counseling;

14 (E) military sexual trauma counseling;

15 (F) bereavement counseling;

16 (G) screenings and referrals for medical
17 issues;

18 (H) substance abuse assessments and re-
19 ferrals;

20 (I) employment assessments and referrals;
21 and

22 (J) explanations and referrals regarding
23 benefits furnished through the Veterans Bene-
24 fits Administration of the Department.

1 (2) An assessment of the feasibility of estab-
2 lishing additional Vet Centers in such State.

3 (3) An assessment of the feasibility of increas-
4 ing staff at existing Vet Centers in such State to en-
5 sure comprehensive coverage.

6 (4) An assessment of any barriers faced by
7 such State regarding—

8 (A) demonstrating a need for additional
9 Vet Centers, mobile Vet Centers, and commu-
10 nity access points;

11 (B) including travel time as a measure of
12 productivity while conducting outreach to un-
13 derserved areas; and

14 (C) building a new Vet Center.

15 (5) An analysis of staffing shortages at Vet
16 Centers in such State, including delays in approving
17 and processing new hires.

18 (6) An outreach strategy for using mobile Vet
19 Centers, Vet Center outstations, and community ac-
20 cess points to ensure that mental health care serv-
21 ices reach veterans in underserved areas in such
22 State.

1 **SEC. 4. REPORT ON MARKETING AND OUTREACH FUNDING**
2 **BY VET CENTERS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
4 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
5 erans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees
6 of Congress a report regarding funding by Vet Centers
7 in covered States of marketing and outreach.

8 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report under subsection (a)
9 shall include, with respect to each covered State, the fol-
10 lowing:

11 (1) An accounting of marketing and outreach
12 funding for each Vet Center in such State.

13 (2) An assessment of the adequacy of the mar-
14 keting and outreach funds for each Vet Center in
15 such State, including the ability of each such Vet
16 Center to connect with veterans about services pro-
17 vided.

18 (3) An analysis of effectiveness of each Vet
19 Center in such State to market and conduct out-
20 reach.

21 (4) A marketing and outreach strategy for Vet
22 Centers to ensure that local resources are effectively
23 utilized to connect with the local veteran community
24 in such State.

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