

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3284

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a toll-free telephone helpline for veterans and other eligible individuals to use to obtain information about the benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 30, 2021

Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Mrs. FISCHER) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a toll-free telephone helpline for veterans and other eligible individuals to use to obtain information about the benefits and services provided by 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Assistance
5 Helpline Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. TELEPHONE HELPLINE FOR ASSISTANCE FOR VET-**
2 **ERANS AND OTHER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF HELPLINE.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish
5 a toll-free telephone helpline that a covered indi-
6 vidual may use to obtain information about, or
7 through which a covered individual may be directed
8 to, any service or benefit provided under a law ad-
9 ministered by the Secretary, including any service
10 provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs in
11 the area in which the covered individual is located.

12 (2) CONTRACT FOR DIRECTION OF CALLS AU-
13 THORIZED.—The Secretary may, in coordination
14 with the Commission, enter into a contract with an
15 third-party to direct calls made to the toll-free
16 helpline established under paragraph (1) to the ap-
17 propriate person regarding a service or benefit de-
18 scribed in that paragraph.

19 (3) LIVE INDIVIDUAL REQUIRED.—The Sec-
20 retary, in coordination with the Commission, shall
21 ensure that a covered individual using the telephone
22 helpline established under paragraph (1) speaks with
23 a live individual rather than a recording.

24 (b) STUDY AND REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than
25 one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
26 Secretary shall, in coordination with the Commission—

1 (1) complete a study to assess the feasibility
 2 and advisability of designating a covered dialing
 3 code for the purposes of reaching the toll-free tele-
 4 phone helpline established under subsection (a)(1);
 5 and

6 (2) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Af-
 7 fairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veteran's
 8 Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on
 9 the findings of the Commission with respect to the
 10 study completed under subparagraph (A).

11 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
 13 means the Federal Communications Commission.

14 (2) COVERED DIALING CODE.—The term “cov-
 15 ered dialing code” means a simple, easy-to-remem-
 16 ber, 3-digit dialing code.

17 (3) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “covered
 18 individual” means—

19 (A) a veteran;

20 (B) an individual acting on behalf of a vet-
 21 eran; or

22 (C) an individual, other than a veteran,
 23 who is eligible to receive a benefit or service
 24 under a law administered by the Secretary.

1 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
2 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

3 (5) VETERAN.—The term “veteran” has the
4 meaning given the term in section 101 of title 38,
5 United States Code.

