

PUBLIC LAW 116-115—FEB. 11, 2020

SUPPORTING VETERANS IN STEM  
CAREERS ACT

Public Law 116–115  
116th Congress

An Act

Feb. 11, 2020  
[S. 153]

To promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

Supporting  
Veterans in  
STEM Careers  
Act.  
42 USC 1861  
note.

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act”.

42 USC 1862t  
note.

**SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

In this Act:

(1) **DIRECTOR.**—The term “Director” means the Director of the National Science Foundation.

(2) **FOUNDATION.**—The term “Foundation” means the National Science Foundation.

(3) **STEM.**—The term “STEM” has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 6621 note).

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

**SEC. 3. SUPPORTING VETERANS IN STEM EDUCATION AND COMPUTER SCIENCE.**

42 USC 1862t.

(a) **SUPPORTING VETERAN INVOLVEMENT IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND STEM EDUCATION.**—The Director shall, through the research and education activities of the Foundation, encourage veterans to study and pursue careers in STEM and computer science, in coordination with other Federal agencies that serve veterans.

Deadline.  
42 USC 1862t.

(b) **VETERAN OUTREACH PLAN.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a plan for how the Foundation can enhance its outreach efforts to veterans. Such plan shall—

(1) report on the Foundation’s existing outreach activities;

(2) identify the best method for the Foundation to leverage existing authorities and programs to facilitate and support veterans in STEM careers and studies, including teaching programs; and

(3) include options for how the Foundation could track veteran participation in research and education programs of the Foundation, and describe any barriers to collecting such information.

(c) NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD INDICATORS REPORT.—The National Science Board shall provide in its annual report on indicators of the state of science and engineering in the United States any available and relevant data on veterans in science and engineering careers or education programs. 42 USC 1862t.

(d) ROBERT NOYCE TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE.—Section 10 of the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 1862n–1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(C) higher education programs that serve or support veterans.”;

(2) in subsection (b)(2)(F)—

(A) by striking “and students” and inserting “, students”; and

(B) by inserting “, and veterans” before the period at the end;

(3) in subsection (c)(2), by inserting “and veterans” before the period at the end; and

(4) in subsection (d)(2), by inserting “and veterans” before the period at the end.

(e) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS AND MASTER TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS UPDATE.—Section 10A(d) of the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 1862n–1a(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)(F)—

(A) by striking “and individuals” and inserting “, individuals”; and

(B) by inserting “, and veterans” before the period at the end; and

(2) in paragraph (4)(B), by inserting “and veterans” before the period at the end.

(f) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION COMPUTER AND NETWORK SECURITY CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS UPDATE.—Section 5(a) of the Cyber Security Research and Development Act (15 U.S.C. 7404(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “and students who are veterans” after “these fields”; and

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (I), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (J) as subparagraph (K); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (I) the following:

“(J) creating opportunities for veterans to transition to careers in computer and network security; and”.

(g) GRADUATE TRAINEESHIPS IN COMPUTER AND NETWORK SECURITY RESEARCH UPDATE.—Section 5(c)(6)(C) of the Cyber Security Research and Development Act (15 U.S.C. 7404(c)(6)(C)) is amended by inserting “or veterans” after “disciplines”.

(h) VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES STEM EDUCATION INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP.— 42 USC 1862t.

- Establishment. (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall establish, or designate, an inter-agency working group to improve veteran and military spouse equity and representation in STEM fields.
- Strategic plan. (2) **DUTIES OF INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP.**—An inter-agency working group established under paragraph (1) shall develop and facilitate the implementation by participating agencies of a strategic plan, which shall—
- (A) specify and prioritize short- and long-term objectives;
  - (B) specify the common metrics that will be used by Federal agencies to assess progress toward achieving such objectives;
  - (C) identify barriers veterans face in reentering the workforce, including a lack of formal STEM education, career guidance, and the process of transferring military credits and skills to college credits;
  - (D) identify barriers military spouses face in establishing careers in STEM fields;
  - (E) describe the approaches that each participating agency will take to address administratively the barriers described in subparagraphs (C) and (D); and
  - (F) identify any barriers that require Federal or State legislative or regulatory changes in order to be addressed.
- Deadline. (3) **REPORT.**—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall—
- (A) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, submit to Congress the strategic plan required under paragraph (2); and
  - (B) include in the annual report required by section 101(d) of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 6621(d)) a description of any progress made in carrying out the activities described in paragraph (2) of this subsection.
- (4) **SUNSET.**—An interagency working group established under paragraph (1) shall terminate on the date that is 3 years after the date that it is established.

**SEC. 4. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES STUDY AND REPORT ON BARRIERS FACED BY STUDENT VETERANS PURSUING DEGREES IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, OR MATH.**

- Deadline. (a) **STUDY.**—Not later than August 1, 2022, the Comptroller General of the United States shall complete a study on academic success rates of student veterans pursuing covered degrees and barriers faced by such students in pursuing such degrees.
- Assessments. (b) **ELEMENTS.**—The study required by subsection (a) shall include the following:
- (1) Assessment of available information on the percentage or number of student veterans pursuing a covered degree with educational assistance furnished under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code.
  - (2) Assessment of available information on the percentage or number of such students who pursue a covered degree and do not obtain such degree in four or fewer academic years.

(3) Identification of the reasons that such students do not obtain such degree in four or fewer academic years and whether such reasons are barriers to obtaining such degrees.

(4) Development of recommendations for legislative or administrative action to better align the educational assistance furnished under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, with the needs of such students and address the reasons identified under paragraph (3).

Recommendations.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than August 1, 2022, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of the Comptroller General with respect to the study completed under subsection (a), along with recommendations for such legislative or administrative action as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

(d) DEFINITION OF COVERED DEGREE.—In this section, the term “covered degree” means a standard, undergraduate college degree in a field listed under section 3320(b)(4)(A)(i) of title 38, United States Code.

Approved February 11, 2020.

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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 153 (H.R. 425):

SENATE REPORTS: No. 116–164 (Comm. on Commerce, Science, and Transportation).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Vol. 165 (2019): Dec. 18, considered and passed Senate.

Vol. 166 (2020): Jan. 27, considered and passed House.

DAILY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS (2020):

Feb. 11, Presidential remarks.

