

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 811

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out construction projects for the purpose of improving, renovating, and updating patient care facilities at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. EVANS, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. FILNER, Mr. STUMP, Mr. REYES, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. BAKER, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, and Mr. BUYER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out construction projects for the purpose of improving, renovating, and updating patient care facilities at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

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’ Hospital
5 Emergency Repair Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY**
2 **PROJECTS FOR PATIENT CARE IMPROVE-**
3 **MENTS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Af-
5 fairs is authorized to carry out major medical facility
6 projects in accordance with this section, using funds ap-
7 propriated for fiscal year 2002 or fiscal year 2003 pursu-
8 ant to section 3. The cost of any such project may not
9 exceed \$25,000,000.

10 (2) Projects carried out under this section are not
11 subject to section 8104(a)(2) of title 38, United States
12 Code.

13 (b) PURPOSE OF PROJECTS.—A project carried out
14 pursuant to subsection (a) may be carried out only at a
15 Department of Veterans Affairs medical center and only
16 for the purpose of improving, renovating, and updating to
17 contemporary standards patient care facilities. In selecting
18 medical centers for projects under subsection (a), the Sec-
19 retary shall select projects to improve, renovate, or update
20 facilities to achieve one or more of the following:

21 (1) Seismic protection improvements related to
22 patient safety.

23 (2) Fire safety improvements.

24 (3) Improvements to utility systems and ancil-
25 lary patient care facilities.

1 (4) Improved accommodation for persons with
2 disabilities, including barrier-free access.

3 (5) improvements to specialized programs of the
4 Department, including the following:

5 (A) Blind rehabilitation centers.

6 (B) Inpatient and residential programs for
7 seriously mentally ill veterans, including mental
8 illness research, education, and clinical centers.

9 (C) Residential and rehabilitation pro-
10 grams for veterans with substance-use dis-
11 orders.

12 (D) Physical medicine and rehabilitation
13 activities.

14 (E) Long-term care, including geriatric re-
15 search, education, and clinical centers, adult
16 day care centers, and nursing home care facili-
17 ties.

18 (F) Amputation care, including facilities
19 for prosthetics, orthotics programs, and sensory
20 aids.

21 (G) Spinal cord injury centers.

22 (H) Traumatic brain injury programs.

23 (I) Women veterans' health programs (in-
24 cluding particularly programs involving privacy
25 and accommodation for female patients).

1 (J) Facilities for hospice and palliative
2 care programs.

3 (c) REVIEW PROCESS.—(1) Before a project is sub-
4 mitted to the Secretary with a recommendation that it be
5 approved as a project to be carried out under the authority
6 of this section, the project shall be reviewed by an inde-
7 pendent board within the Department of Veterans Affairs
8 constituted by the Secretary to evaluate capital investment
9 projects. The board shall review each such project to de-
10 termine the project's relevance to the medical care mission
11 of the Department and whether the project improves, ren-
12 ovates, and updates patient care facilities of the Depart-
13 ment in accordance with this section.

14 (2) In selecting projects to be carried out under the
15 authority provided by this section, the Secretary shall con-
16 sider the recommendations of the board under paragraph
17 (1). In any case in which the Secretary selects a project
18 to be carried out under this section that was not rec-
19 ommended for such approval by the board under para-
20 graph (1), the Secretary shall include in the report of the
21 Secretary under section 4(b) notice of such selection and
22 the Secretary's reasons for not following the recommenda-
23 tion of the board with respect to that project.

1 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
3 priated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the Con-
4 struction, Major Projects, account for projects under sec-
5 tion 2—

6 (1) \$250,000,000 for fiscal year 2002; and

7 (2) \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2003.

8 (b) LIMITATION.—Projects may be carried out under
9 section 2 only using funds appropriated pursuant to the
10 authorization of appropriations in subsection (a).

11 **SEC. 4. REPORTS.**

12 (a) GAO REPORT.—Not later than April 1, 2003, the
13 Comptroller General shall submit to the Committees on
14 Veterans' Affairs and on Appropriations of the Senate and
15 House of Representatives a report evaluating the advan-
16 tages and disadvantages of congressional authorization for
17 projects of the type described in section 2(b) through gen-
18 eral authorization as provided by section 2(a), rather than
19 through specific authorization as would otherwise be appli-
20 cable under section 8104(a)(2) of title 38, United States
21 Code. Such report shall include a description of the actions
22 of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs during fiscal year
23 2002 to select and carry out projects under section 2.

24 (b) SECRETARY REPORT.—Not later than 120 days
25 after the date on which the site for the final project under
26 section 2 is selected, the Secretary shall submit to the

1 committees referred to in subsection (a) a report on the
2 authorization process under section 2. The Secretary shall
3 include in the report the following:

4 (1) A listing by project of each such project se-
5 lected by the Secretary under that section, together
6 with a prospectus description of the purposes of the
7 project, the estimated cost of the project, and a
8 statement attesting to the review of the project
9 under section 2(c), and, if that project was not rec-
10 ommended by the board, the Secretary's justification
11 under section 2(d) for not following the rec-
12 ommendation of the board.

13 (2) An assessment of the utility to the Depart-
14 ment of Veterans Affairs of that authorization proc-
15 ess.

16 (3) Such recommendations as the Secretary
17 considers appropriate for future congressional policy
18 for authorizations of major and minor medical facil-
19 ity construction projects for the Department of Vet-
20 erans Affairs.

21 (4) Any other matter that the Secretary con-
22 siders to be appropriate with respect to oversight by
23 Congress of capital facilities projects of the Depart-
24 ment of Veterans Affairs.

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