

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2510

To direct the Secretary of Defense to establish within the Department of Defense centers of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to open burn pits.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 26, 2013

Mr. BISHOP of New York (for himself, Mr. JONES, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. COOPER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense to establish within the Department of Defense centers of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to open burn pits.

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 “Helping Veterans Ex-
5 posed to Toxic Chemicals Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN PREVENTION, DIAG-**
2 **NOSIS, MITIGATION, TREATMENT, AND REHA-**
3 **BILITATION OF HEALTH CONDITIONS RELAT-**
4 **ING TO EXPOSURE TO OPEN BURN PITS AND**
5 **OTHER EXPOSURE TO OPEN BURN PITS AND**
6 **OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Defense
8 shall establish within the Department of Defense three
9 centers of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitiga-
10 tion, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions re-
11 lating to exposure to open burn pits and other environ-
12 mental exposures to carry out the responsibilities specified
13 in subsection (c). Such centers shall be established
14 using—

15 (1) the directives, policies, and Comptroller
16 General and Inspector General recommendations in
17 effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act;
18 and

19 (2) guidance issued pursuant to section 313 of
20 the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
21 Year 2013 (Public Law 112–239; 126 Stat. 1692;
22 10 U.S.C. 1074 note).

23 (b) SELECTION OF SITES.—In selecting sites for the
24 centers of excellence under subsection (a), the Secretary
25 of Defense shall select entities that—

1 (1) are equipped with the specialized equipment
2 needed to study, diagnose, and treat health condi-
3 tions relating to exposure to open burn pits and
4 other environmental exposures;

5 (2) have a publication track record of post-de-
6 ployment health exposures among veterans from
7 Iraq and Afghanistan;

8 (3) have collaborated with a geosciences depart-
9 ment that has a medical geology division;

10 (4) have developed animal models and in vitro
11 models of dust immunology and lung injury from
12 Iraq and Afghanistan; and

13 (5) have expertise in allergy and immunology,
14 pulmonary diseases, and industrial and management
15 engineering.

16 (c) PARTNERSHIPS.—The Secretary shall ensure that
17 the centers collaborate to the maximum extent practicable
18 with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, institutions of
19 higher education, and other appropriate public and private
20 entities (including international entities) to carry out the
21 responsibilities specified in subsection (d).

22 (d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The center shall have re-
23 sponsibilities as follows:

24 (1) To implement the comprehensive plan and
25 strategy for the Department of Defense for the pre-

1 vention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and reha-
2 bilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to
3 open burn pits and other environmental exposures.

4 (2) To provide for the development, testing, and
5 dissemination within the Department of best prac-
6 tices for the treatment of health conditions relating
7 to exposure to open burn pits and other environ-
8 mental exposures.

9 (3) To provide guidance for the health system
10 of the Department in determining the personnel re-
11 quired to provide quality health care for members of
12 the Armed Forces with health conditions relating to
13 exposure to open burn pits and other environmental
14 exposures.

15 (4) To establish, implement, and oversee a com-
16 prehensive program to train health professionals of
17 the Department in the treatment of health condi-
18 tions relating to exposure to open burn pits and
19 other environmental exposures.

20 (5) To facilitate advancements in the study of
21 the short-term and long-term effects of exposure to
22 open burn pits and other environmental exposures.

23 (6) To disseminate within the military medical
24 treatment facilities of the Department best practices
25 for training health professionals with respect to

1 health conditions relating to exposure to open burn
2 pits and other environmental exposures.

3 (7) To conduct basic science and translational
4 research on health conditions relating to exposure to
5 open burn pits and other environmental exposures
6 for the purposes of understanding the etiology of
7 such conditions and developing preventive interven-
8 tions and new treatments.

9 (8) To provide medical treatment to all veterans
10 identified as part of the burn pits registry estab-
11 lished under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and
12 Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012
13 (Public Law 112–260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

14 (e) USE OF BURN PITS REGISTRY DATA.—In car-
15 rying out its responsibilities under subsection (c), the cen-
16 ter shall have access to and make use of the data accumu-
17 lated by the burn pits registry established under section
18 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits
19 Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 38
20 U.S.C. 527 note).

21 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) The term “open burn pit” means an area
23 of land located in Afghanistan or Iraq that—

1 (A) is designated by the Secretary of De-
2 fense to be used for disposing solid waste by
3 burning in the outdoor air; and

4 (B) does not contain a commercially manu-
5 factured incinerator or other equipment specifi-
6 cally designed and manufactured for the burn-
7 ing of solid waste.

8 (2) The term “other environmental exposures”
9 means exposure to environmental hazards, including
10 burn pits, dust or sand, hazardous materials, and
11 waste at any site in Afghanistan or Iraq that emits
12 smoke containing pollutants present in the environ-
13 ment or smoke from fires or explosions.

14 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
15 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
16 \$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2019.

○