To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide COVID–19 vaccines to an expanded population of veterans during a covered emergency period, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 18, 2021

Mr. Crist introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide COVID–19 vaccines to an expanded population of veterans during a covered emergency period, and for other purposes.

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Vaccines for Veterans Act”.
SEC. 2. COVID–19 VACCINES FOR EXPANDED POPULATION OF VETERANS DURING COVERED EMERGENCY PERIOD.

(a) COVID–19 VACCINES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, during a covered emergency period, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may furnish the COVID–19 vaccine to any veteran who was discharged from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions without regard to whether the veteran is enrolled in the annual patient enrollment system under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, or otherwise eligible to receive health care services under chapter 17 of such title.

(2) STATE GUIDELINES.—In furnishing COVID–19 vaccines pursuant to paragraph (1), each director of a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility may determine priorities among veterans eligible to receive COVID–19 vaccines in accordance with guidelines established by the State in which the facility is located.

(b) COORDINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall coordinate with the entities described in paragraph (2), as appropriate, to determine—
(A) whether an individual seeking to receive a COVID–19 vaccine pursuant this section meets the requirements of subsection (a)(1); and

(B) the relevant prioritization for such individual, in accordance with subsection (a)(2).

(2) COORDINATING ENTITIES.—The entities described in this paragraph are the following:

(A) The Secretary of Defense.

(B) The Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(C) The Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(D) The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(E) The heads of State departments of health (or related agencies).

(F) Any other Federal agency determined relevant by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered emergency period” means a period beginning on the date on which a President declares a national emergency under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) with respect to the coronavirus disease 2019.
(COVID–19) and ending on the date that is 30 days after the date on which such national emergency declaration terminates.

(2) The term “covered medical condition” means a medical condition determined by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be high risk with respect to COVID–19.

(3) The term “COVID–19 vaccine” means any vaccine approved or authorized by the Commissioner of Food and Drugs for COVID–19.

(4) The term “State” includes each of the several States, the District of Columbia, each territory or possession of the United States, and each federally recognized Indian Tribe.