

117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# S. 1198

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## AN ACT

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and expand the Solid Start program of 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Solid Start Act of  
3 2022”.

4 **SEC. 2. SOLID START PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
5 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United  
7 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
8 lowing new subchapter:

9 “SUBCHAPTER II—OTHER OUTREACH  
10 PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

11 “§ 6320. Solid Start program

12 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a  
13 program, to be known as the ‘Solid Start program’, under  
14 which the Secretary shall—

15 “(1) build the capacity of the Department to ef-  
16 ficiently and effectively respond to the queries and  
17 needs of veterans who have recently separated from  
18 the Armed Forces; and

19 “(2) systemically integrate and coordinate ef-  
20 forts to assist veterans, including efforts—

21 “(A) to proactively reach out to newly sep-  
22 arated veterans to inform them of their eligi-  
23 bility for programs of and benefits provided by  
24 the Department; and

25 “(B) to connect veterans in crisis to re-  
26 sources that address their immediate needs.

1       “(b) ACTIVITIES OF THE SOLID START PROGRAM.—

2 (1) The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of  
3 Defense, shall carry out the Solid Start program of the  
4 Department by—

5           “(A) collecting up-to-date contact information  
6 during transition classes or separation counseling for  
7 all members of the Armed Forces who are sepa-  
8 rating from the Armed Forces, while explaining the  
9 existence and purpose of the Solid Start program;

10          “(B) calling each veteran, regardless of separa-  
11 tion type or characterization of service, three times  
12 within the first year after separation of the veteran  
13 from the Armed Forces;

14          “(C) providing information about the Solid  
15 Start program on the website of the Department  
16 and in materials of the Department, especially tran-  
17 sition booklets and other resources;

18          “(D) ensuring calls are truly tailored to the  
19 needs of each veteran’s unique situation by con-  
20 ducting quality assurance tests;

21          “(E) prioritizing outreach to veterans who have  
22 accessed mental health resources prior to separation  
23 from the Armed Forces;

1           “(F) providing women veterans with informa-  
2           tion that is tailored to their specific health care and  
3           benefit needs;

4           “(G) as feasible, providing information on ac-  
5           cess to State and local resources, including Vet Cen-  
6           ters and veterans service organizations; and

7           “(H) gathering and analyzing data assessing  
8           the effectiveness of the Solid Start program.

9           “(2) The Secretary, in coordination with the Sec-  
10          retary of Defense, may carry out the Solid Start program  
11          by—

12           “(A) encouraging members of the Armed  
13          Forces who are transitioning to civilian life to au-  
14          thorize alternate points of contact who can be  
15          reached should the member be unavailable during  
16          the first year following the separation of the member  
17          from the Armed Forces; and

18           “(B) following up missed phone calls with tai-  
19          lored mailings to ensure the veteran still receives  
20          similar information.

21          “(3) In this subsection:

22           “(A) The term ‘Vet Center’ has the meaning  
23          given that term in section 1712A(h) of this title.

24           “(B) The term ‘veterans service organization’  
25          means an organization recognized by the Secretary

1 for the representation of veterans under section  
2 5902 of this title.”.

3 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 63 of  
4 such title, as amended by subsection (a), is further amend-  
5 ed—

6 (1) by inserting before section 6301 the fol-  
7 lowing:

8 **“Subchapter I—Outreach Services Program”;**

9 and

10 (2) in sections 6301, 6303, 6304, 6305, 6306,  
11 and 6307, by striking “this chapter” each place it  
12 appears and inserting “this subchapter”.

13 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The table of sections  
14 at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended—

15 (1) by inserting before the item relating to sec-  
16 tion 6301 the following new item:

“SUBCHAPTER I—OUTREACH SERVICES PROGRAM”;

17 and

1           (2) by adding at the end the following new  
2           items:

“SUBCHAPTER II—OTHER OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

“6320. Solid Start program.”.

Passed the Senate September 19, 2022.

Attest:

*Secretary.*



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