

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1289

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish and carry out a pilot program to administer to eligible veterans medically-tailored meals and groceries, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2025

Mr. BUCHANAN (for himself and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish and carry out a pilot program to administer to eligible veterans medically-tailored meals and groceries, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Nutrition and
5 Wellness Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PRO-**
2 **GRAM TO ADMINISTER MEDICALLY-TAI-**
3 **LORED MEALS AND GROCERIES TO CERTAIN**
4 **ELIGIBLE VETERANS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
7 erans Affairs shall establish and carry out a pilot program
8 (to be known as the “Food is Medicine program”).

9 (b) FUNCTIONS.—Under the Food is Medicine pro-
10 gram, the Secretary shall,

11 (1) with respect to eligible veterans described in
12 subsection (c)—

13 (A) administer medically-tailored meals
14 and medically-tailored groceries; and

15 (B) furnish nutrition education and cook-
16 ing classes through a registered dieticians, nu-
17 tritionists, and community health workers;

18 (2) develop and seek to implement training pro-
19 grams for health care providers employed by the De-
20 partment of Veterans Affairs with respect to the in-
21 tegration of the Food is Medicine program in the
22 treatment plans of veterans receiving health care
23 under the laws administered by the Secretary; and

24 (3) seek to collaborate with community-based
25 organizations, including food banks and local agri-
26 culture programs, to—

1 (A) procure fresh and locally-sourced
2 produce; and

3 (B) expand the availability of medically-tai-
4 lored meals and medically-tailored groceries.

5 (c) ELIGIBILITY.—An eligible veteran described in
6 this subsection is a veteran (as defined in section 101 of
7 title 38, United States Code) who is enrolled in the system
8 of annual patient enrollment established and operated
9 under section 1705 of such section and—

10 (1) receives health care furnished by the De-
11 partment with respect to multiple chronic conditions,
12 including diabetes, cancer, or heart failure; or

13 (2) receives such health care with respect to
14 maternal health, including prenatal care, labor and
15 delivery care, postpartum care, and is at risk of
16 preeclampsia or gestational diabetes.

17 (d) REGIONAL BALANCE.—In carrying out the Food
18 is Medicine program, the Secretary shall, to the maximum
19 extent practicable ensure geographic diversity of the pilot
20 program offices of the Food is Medicine program.

21 (e) REPORT.—During the period the authority to
22 carry out the Food is Medicine program is effective, the
23 Secretary shall submit to Congress an annual report on
24 such program that includes—

1 (1) the number of eligible veterans participating
2 in such program;

3 (2) with respect to such eligible veterans, a
4 summary of—

5 (A) health outcomes;

6 (B) effects on physical and mental health;

7 (C) quality of life; and

8 (D) the extent of utilization of health care
9 under the laws administered by the Secretary;

10 (3) an evaluation of the effectiveness of such
11 program, including estimated cost savings to the De-
12 partment of Veterans Affairs; and

13 (4) recommendations of the Secretary with re-
14 spect to potential improvements to such program.

15 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2),
17 there are authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
18 retary for fiscal years 2025 through 2028 such sums
19 as may be necessary to carry out the Food is Medi-
20 cine program.

21 (2) USE OF FUNDS.—Any amounts appro-
22 priated pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be used
23 for—

24 (A) developing and operating the Food is
25 Medicine program;

1 (B) hiring registered dieticians and nutri-
2 tion specialists;

3 (C) conducting research and evaluations;
4 and

5 (D) establishing partnerships with local or-
6 ganizations pursuant to subsection (b)(3).

7 (g) TERMINATION DATE.—The authority of the Sec-
8 retary to carry out the Food is Medicine program shall
9 terminate on the date that is three years after the date
10 of the enactment of this Act.

11 (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

12 (1) The term “medically-tailored groceries”
13 means nutritious food for an individual with a diet-
14 sensitive condition curated to the treatment plan of
15 such individual.

16 (2) The term “medically-tailored meals” means
17 nutritious meals customized for an individual with a
18 severe chronic condition or limitation in activities of
19 daily living.

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