

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2576

To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 1, 2025

Ms. PINGREE (for herself, Ms. TOKUDA, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. MRVAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4       (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5       “Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Sup-  
6       port Act of 2025”.

7       (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for  
8       this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

## TITLE I—DEFINING MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

Sec. 101. Report on military sexual trauma in the digital age.

## TITLE II—DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND CLAIMS PROCESSING

Sec. 201. Definition of military sexual trauma.

Sec. 202. Conforming changes relating to specialized teams to evaluate claims involving military sexual trauma.

Sec. 203. Evaluation of claims involving military sexual trauma.

Sec. 204. Choice of location of Department of Veterans Affairs medical examination for assessment of claims for compensation relating to disability resulting from military sexual trauma.

Sec. 205. Communications from the Department of Veterans Affairs to individuals who have experienced military sexual trauma.

Sec. 206. Study on training and processing relating to claims for disability compensation relating to military sexual trauma.

Sec. 207. Annual special focus review of claims for disability compensation for disabilities relating to military sexual trauma.

Sec. 208. Workgroup on medical examinations for claims for disability compensation for disabilities relating to military sexual trauma.

## TITLE III—ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Sec. 301. Expansion of eligibility for counseling and treatment for military sexual trauma to include all former members of the reserve components of the armed forces.

Sec. 302. Connection to veterans health administration when a disability claim related to military sexual trauma is submitted to veterans benefits administration.

Sec. 303. Care relating to military sexual trauma for individuals who withdraw from or otherwise do not complete service at service academies.

# 1      **TITLE I—DEFINING MILITARY** 2                                    **SEXUAL TRAUMA**

## 3      **SEC. 101. REPORT ON MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA IN THE** 4                                    **DIGITAL AGE.**

5            (a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year  
6 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
7 of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Vet-  
8 erans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Vet-  
9 erans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report  
10 on military sexual trauma in the digital age.

1 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The report required under  
2 subsection (a) shall include the following:

3 (1) A comprehensive evaluation and assessment  
4 of current Department of Veterans Affairs statutes,  
5 regulations, and agency guidance relating to military  
6 sexual trauma for the purposes of access to health  
7 care under chapter 17 of title 38, United States  
8 Code, and compensation under chapter 11 of such  
9 title to identify—

10 (A) gaps in coverage for health care and  
11 compensation eligibility relating to military sex-  
12 ual trauma involving online or other techno-  
13 logical communications; and

14 (B) the feasibility and advisability of ex-  
15 panding health care and compensation for trau-  
16 ma that is nonsexual in nature involving online  
17 or other technological communications.

18 (2) Recommendations for revising statutes, reg-  
19 ulations, and agency guidance in response to the  
20 evaluation and assessment under paragraph (1).

21 (c) CONSULTATION.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out subsection  
23 (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult  
24 veterans service organizations and such other stake-

1 holders as the Secretary considers relevant and ap-  
 2 propriate.

3 (2) RELATION TO FACA.—Chapter 10 of title 5,  
 4 United States Code, shall not apply to paragraph  
 5 (1).

6 (d) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA DEFINED.—In this  
 7 section, the term “military sexual trauma”—

8 (1) with respect to eligibility for health care,  
 9 has the meaning given such term in section  
 10 1720D(f) of title 38, United States Code, as added  
 11 by section 301; and

12 (2) with respect to eligibility for compensation,  
 13 has the meaning given such term in section 1166A(i)  
 14 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section  
 15 203(a).

## 16 **TITLE II—DISABILITY COM-** 17 **PENSATION AND CLAIMS** 18 **PROCESSING**

### 19 **SEC. 201. DEFINITION OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

20 In this title, the term “military sexual trauma” has  
 21 the meaning given such term in section 1166A(i) of title  
 22 38, United States Code, as added by section 203(a).

1 **SEC. 202. CONFORMING CHANGES RELATING TO SPECIAL-**  
2 **IZED TEAMS TO EVALUATE CLAIMS INVOLV-**  
3 **ING MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

4 Section 1166 of title 38, United States Code, is  
5 amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “for com-  
7 pensation for a covered mental health condition”  
8 and inserting “for compensation for a condition,  
9 which may include a covered mental health condi-  
10 tion,”; and

11 (2) by amending subsection (d) to read as fol-  
12 lows:

13 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ‘cov-  
14 ered mental health condition’ and ‘military sexual trauma’  
15 have the meanings given those terms in section 1166A(i)  
16 of this title.”.

17 **SEC. 203. EVALUATION OF CLAIMS INVOLVING MILITARY**  
18 **SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VI of chapter 11 of  
20 such title is amended by inserting after section 1166 the  
21 following new section:

22 **“§ 1166A. Evaluation of claims involving military sex-**  
23 **ual trauma**

24 “(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) In the case of any veteran  
25 who claims that a covered mental health condition based  
26 on military sexual trauma was incurred in or aggravated

1 by active military, naval, air, or space service, the Sec-  
2 retary shall consider the following:

3 “(A) A diagnosis of such mental health condi-  
4 tion by a mental health professional.

5 “(B) A link, established by medical evidence,  
6 between current symptoms and a military sexual  
7 trauma.

8 “(C) Credible corroborating evidence, in accord-  
9 ance with subsections (b) and (c), that the claimed  
10 military sexual trauma occurred.

11 “(2) The reasons for granting or denying service-con-  
12 nection in each case described in paragraph (1) shall be  
13 recorded in full.

14 “(b) NONMILITARY SOURCES OF EVIDENCE.—(1)  
15 For purposes of subsection (a), evidence from sources  
16 other than official records of the Department of Defense  
17 regarding the veteran’s active military, naval, air, or space  
18 service may corroborate the veteran’s account of the trau-  
19 ma.

20 “(2) Examples of evidence described in paragraph (1)  
21 include the following:

22 “(A) Records from law enforcement authorities,  
23 rape crisis centers, mental health counseling centers,  
24 hospitals, and physicians.

1           “(B) Pregnancy tests and tests for sexually  
2           transmitted diseases.

3           “(C) Statements from family members, room-  
4           mates, other members of the Armed Forces or vet-  
5           erans, and clergy.

6           “(c) EVIDENCE OF BEHAVIOR CHANGES.—(1) For  
7           purposes of subsection (a), evidence of a behavior change  
8           following military sexual trauma is one type of relevant  
9           evidence that may be found in sources described in such  
10          subsection.

11          “(2) Examples of behavior changes that may be rel-  
12          evant evidence of military sexual trauma include the fol-  
13          lowing:

14               “(A) A request for a transfer to another mili-  
15               tary duty assignment.

16               “(B) Deterioration in work performance.

17               “(C) Substance abuse or substance use dis-  
18               order.

19               “(D) Episodes of depression, panic attacks, or  
20               anxiety without an identifiable cause.

21               “(E) Unexplained economic or social behavior  
22               changes.

23          “(d) NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPLY EVI-  
24          DENCE.—The Secretary may not deny a claim of a veteran  
25          for compensation under this chapter for a covered mental

1 health condition that is based on military sexual trauma  
2 without first—

3 “(1) advising the veteran that evidence de-  
4 scribed in subsections (b) and (c) may constitute  
5 credible corroborating evidence of the military sexual  
6 trauma; and

7 “(2) allowing the veteran an opportunity to fur-  
8 nish such corroborating evidence or advise the Sec-  
9 retary of potential sources of such evidence.

10 “(e) REVIEW OF EVIDENCE.—In reviewing a claim  
11 for compensation described in subsection (a)(1), for any  
12 evidence identified as part of such claim that is described  
13 in subsection (b) or (c), the Secretary shall submit such  
14 evidence to such medical or mental health professional as  
15 the Secretary considers appropriate, including clinical and  
16 counseling experts employed by the Department, to obtain  
17 an opinion as to whether the evidence indicates that a mili-  
18 tary sexual trauma occurred.

19 “(f) POINT OF CONTACT.—The Secretary shall en-  
20 sure that each document provided to a veteran relating  
21 to a claim for compensation described in subsection (a)(1)  
22 includes contact information for an appropriate point of  
23 contact with the Department.

24 “(g) SPECIALIZED TEAMS.—The Secretary shall en-  
25 sure that all claims for compensation described in sub-



1 section (a)(1) are reviewed and processed by a specialized  
2 team established under section 1166 of this title.

3 “(h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING APPLICA-  
4 TION TO NONSEXUAL PERSONAL ASSAULT.—The Sec-  
5 retary shall not construe this section as supplanting the  
6 standard of proof or evidence required for claims for post-  
7 traumatic stress disorder based on nonsexual personal as-  
8 sault, which the Secretary shall continue to define in regu-  
9 lation.

10 “(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 “(1) The term ‘covered mental health condition’  
12 means post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, de-  
13 pression, or other mental health diagnosis that the  
14 Secretary determines to be related to military sexual  
15 trauma and which may be service-connected under  
16 section 1110 of this title.

17 “(2) The term ‘mental health professional’  
18 means a provider in the field of mental health who  
19 meets the credential, licensure, education, and train-  
20 ing requirements established by the Secretary.

21 “(3) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ means,  
22 with respect to a veteran, a physical assault of a sex-  
23 ual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual har-  
24 assment that occurred while the veteran was serving  
25 in the active military, naval, air, or space service.”.

1 (b) OUTREACH.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
3 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
4 retary of Veterans Affairs shall implement, with  
5 input from the veteran community, an informative  
6 outreach program for veterans regarding the stand-  
7 ard of proof for evaluation of claims relating to mili-  
8 tary sexual trauma, including requirements for a  
9 medical examination and opinion.

10 (2) TARGETED OUTREACH.—In implementing  
11 the program under paragraph (1), the Secretary  
12 shall, to the extent practicable, target outreach to  
13 veterans who submitted a claim relating to military  
14 sexual trauma that was denied.

15 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
16 at the beginning of chapter 11 of such title is amended  
17 by inserting after the item relating to section 1166 the  
18 following new item:

“1166A. Evaluation of claims involving military sexual trauma.”.

19 **SEC. 204. CHOICE OF LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-**  
20 **ERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL EXAMINATION FOR**  
21 **ASSESSMENT OF CLAIMS FOR COMPENSA-**  
22 **TION RELATING TO DISABILITY RESULTING**  
23 **FROM MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1165 of title 38, United  
25 States Code, is amended—

1 (1) in the section heading, by inserting “**and**  
2 **location of medical examination**” after “**ex-**  
3 **aminer**”;

4 (2) in subsection (a), by striking “a physical as-  
5 sault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature,  
6 or sexual harassment” and inserting “military sexual  
7 trauma (as defined in section 1166A(i) of this  
8 title)”;

9 (3) by redesignating subsection (c) as sub-  
10 section (d); and

11 (4) by inserting after subsection (b) the fol-  
12 lowing new subsection (c):

13 “(c) CHOICE OF EXAMINATION LOCATION.—The  
14 Secretary shall ensure that a veteran who requires a med-  
15 ical examination in support of a claim described in sub-  
16 section (a) may request that the medical examination take  
17 place at a medical facility of the Department by a qualified  
18 employee of the Department rather than at a location des-  
19 ignated by a contractor of the Department that performs  
20 such examinations on behalf of the Department.”.

21 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
22 at the beginning of chapter 11 of such title is amended  
23 by striking the item relating to section 1165 and inserting  
24 the following new item:

“1165. Choice of sex of medical examiner and location of medical examination  
for certain disabilities.”.

1 **SEC. 205. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
2 **VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO**  
3 **HAVE EXPERIENCED MILITARY SEXUAL**  
4 **TRAUMA.**

5 (a) REVIEW WORKGROUP.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans  
7 Affairs shall establish a workgroup to review cor-  
8 respondence relating to military sexual trauma.

9 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The workgroup established  
10 under paragraph (1) shall be composed of members  
11 who shall be appointed by the Secretary from among  
12 employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs  
13 who are experts in military sexual trauma and men-  
14 tal health, of whom—

15 (A) one or more shall be appointed from  
16 among mental health providers of the Veterans  
17 Health Administration;

18 (B) one or more shall be appointed from  
19 among experts on sexual assault and sexual  
20 harassment of the Veterans Benefits Adminis-  
21 tration; and

22 (C) one or more shall be appointed from  
23 among experts on sexual assault and sexual  
24 harassment of the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

25 (3) DUTIES.—The workgroup established under  
26 paragraph (1) shall—

1 (A) review standard correspondence, which  
2 may include templates for notices under sec-  
3 tions 5103, 5104, 5104B, and 7104 of title 38,  
4 United States Code, from the Department to  
5 individuals who have experienced military sex-  
6 ual trauma for sensitivity; and

7 (B) ensure that the correspondence—

8 (i) treats such individuals with dignity  
9 and respect; and

10 (ii) does not re-traumatize such indi-  
11 viduals.

12 (4) INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS EXPERIENCED MILI-  
13 TARY SEXUAL TRAUMA DEFINED.—In this sub-  
14 section, the term “individual who has experienced  
15 military sexual trauma” means—

16 (A) an individual who has filed a claim for  
17 compensation under chapter 11 of title 38,  
18 United States Code, relating to military sexual  
19 trauma;

20 (B) a veteran who has been awarded com-  
21 pensation under such chapter relating to mili-  
22 tary sexual trauma; or

23 (C) a member of the Armed Forces (in-  
24 cluding a member of the National Guard or Re-  
25 serves), a former member of the Armed Forces,

1 or a veteran who is receiving care from the De-  
2 partment relating to military sexual trauma.

3 (b) CONTENTS OF CERTAIN WRITTEN COMMUNICA-  
4 TIONS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MILI-  
5 TARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.—

6 (1) NOTICE TO CLAIMANTS OF REQUIRED IN-  
7 FORMATION AND EVIDENCE.—Section 5103 of title  
8 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at  
9 the end the following new subsection:

10 “(c) WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO INDIVIDUALS  
11 WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MILITARY SEXUAL TRAU-  
12 MA.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that any written com-  
13 munication under this section from the Department to an  
14 individual who has experienced military sexual trauma in-  
15 cludes each of the following:

16 “(A) Contact information for each of the fol-  
17 lowing:

18 “(i) The military sexual trauma coordi-  
19 nator of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

20 “(ii) The military sexual trauma coordi-  
21 nator of the Veterans Health Administration.

22 “(iii) The Veterans Crisis Line.

23 “(iv) The facility of the Veterans Health  
24 Administration closest to where the individual  
25 resides.

1           “(v) The Vet Center closest to where the  
2           individual resides.

3           “(B) Information on the eligibility of the indi-  
4           vidual for services provided through the Vet Center  
5           described in subparagraph (A)(v).

6           “(2) In this subsection:

7           “(A) The term ‘individual who has experienced  
8           military sexual trauma’ means—

9           “(i) an individual who has filed a claim for  
10          compensation under chapter 11 of this title re-  
11          lating to military sexual trauma;

12          “(ii) a veteran who has been awarded com-  
13          pensation under such chapter relating to mili-  
14          tary sexual trauma; or

15          “(iii) a member of the Armed Forces (in-  
16          cluding a member of the National Guard or Re-  
17          serves), a former member of the Armed Forces,  
18          or a veteran who is receiving care from the De-  
19          partment relating to military sexual trauma.

20          “(B) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ has the  
21          meaning given that term in section 1166A(i) of this  
22          title.

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

1           “(D) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means  
2           the toll-free hotline for veterans established under  
3           section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

4           (2) DECISIONS AND NOTICES OF DECISIONS.—  
5           Section 5104 of title 38, United States Code, is  
6           amended by adding at the end the following new  
7           subsection:

8           “(e)(1) The Secretary shall ensure that any written  
9           communication under this section from the Department  
10          to an individual who has experienced military sexual trau-  
11          ma includes each of the following:

12           “(A) Contact information for each of the fol-  
13          lowing:

14           “(i) The military sexual trauma coordi-  
15          nator of the Veterans Health Administration.

16           “(ii) The Veterans Crisis Line.

17           “(iii) The facility of the Veterans Health  
18          Administration closest to where the individual  
19          resides.

20           “(iv) The Vet Center closest to where the  
21          individual resides.

22           “(B) Information on the eligibility of the indi-  
23          vidual for services provided through the Vet Center  
24          described in subparagraph (A)(iv).



1       “(2) The Secretary shall ensure that any written  
2 communication under this section from the Department  
3 to an individual who has experienced military sexual trauma that includes notification of an award of compensation  
4 under chapter 11 of this title relating to military sexual  
5 trauma includes—

6               “(A) the contact information described in paragraph (1); and

7               “(B) the contact information for the military  
8 sexual trauma coordinator of the Veterans Benefits  
9 Administration.

10       “(3) In this subsection:

11               “(A) The term ‘individual who has experienced  
12 military sexual trauma’ means—

13                       “(i) an individual who has filed a claim for  
14 compensation under chapter 11 of this title relating to military sexual trauma;

15                       “(ii) a veteran who has been awarded compensation under such chapter relating to military sexual trauma; or

16                       “(iii) a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves), a former member of the Armed Forces, or a veteran who is receiving care from the Department relating to military sexual trauma.

1           “(B) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ has the  
2           meaning given that term in section 1166A(i) of this  
3           title.

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

6           “(D) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means  
7           the toll-free hotline for veterans established under  
8           section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

9           (3) HIGHER-LEVEL REVIEW BY THE AGENCY OF  
10          ORIGINAL JURISDICTION.—Section 5104B of title  
11          38, United States Code, is amended by adding at  
12          the end the following new subsection:

13          “(f) WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO INDIVIDUALS  
14          WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MILITARY SEXUAL TRAU-  
15          MA.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that any written com-  
16          munication under this section from the Department to an  
17          individual who has experienced military sexual trauma in-  
18          cludes each of the following:

19                  “(A) Contact information for each of the fol-  
20          lowing:

21                          “(i) The military sexual trauma coordi-  
22                          nator of the Veterans Health Administration.

23                          “(ii) The Veterans Crisis Line.

1           “(iii) The facility of the Veterans Health  
2           Administration closest to where the individual  
3           resides.

4           “(iv) The Vet Center closest to where the  
5           individual resides.

6           “(B) Information on the eligibility of the indi-  
7           vidual for services provided through the Vet Center  
8           described in subparagraph (A)(iv).

9           “(2) The Secretary shall ensure that any written  
10          communication under this section from the Department  
11          to an individual who has experienced military sexual trau-  
12          ma that includes notification of an award of compensation  
13          under chapter 11 of this title relating to military sexual  
14          trauma includes—

15               “(A) the contact information described in para-  
16               graph (1); and

17               “(B) the contact information for the military  
18               sexual trauma coordinator of the Veterans Benefits  
19               Administration.

20          “(3) In this subsection:

21               “(A) The term ‘individual who has experienced  
22               military sexual trauma’ means—

23                       “(i) an individual who has filed a claim for  
24                       compensation under chapter 11 of this title re-  
25                       lating to military sexual trauma;

1           “(ii) a veteran who has been awarded com-  
2           pensation under such chapter relating to mili-  
3           tary sexual trauma; or

4           “(iii) a member of the Armed Forces (in-  
5           cluding a member of the National Guard or Re-  
6           serves), a former member of the Armed Forces,  
7           or a veteran who is receiving care from the De-  
8           partment relating to military sexual trauma.

9           “(B) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ has the  
10          meaning given that term in section 1166A(i) of this  
11          title.

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

14          “(D) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means  
15          the toll-free hotline for veterans established under  
16          section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

17          (4) BOARD OF VETERANS’ APPEALS.—Section  
18          7104 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by  
19          adding at the end the following new subsection:

20          “(g)(1) The Secretary shall ensure that any written  
21          communication under this section from the Department  
22          to an individual who has experienced military sexual trau-  
23          ma include each of the following:

24                 “(A) Contact information for each of the fol-  
25          lowing:

1           “(i) The military sexual trauma coordi-  
2           nator of the Veterans Health Administration.

3           “(ii) The Veterans Crisis Line.

4           “(iii) The facility of the Veterans Health  
5           Administration closest to where the individual  
6           resides.

7           “(iv) The Vet Center closest to where the  
8           individual resides.

9           “(B) Information on the eligibility of the indi-  
10          vidual for services provided through the Vet Center  
11          described in subparagraph (A)(iv).

12          “(2) The Secretary shall ensure that any written  
13          communication under this section from the Department  
14          to an individual who has experienced military sexual trau-  
15          ma that includes notification of an award of compensation  
16          under chapter 11 of this title relating to military sexual  
17          trauma includes—

18                 “(A) the contact information described in para-  
19                 graph (1); and

20                 “(B) the contact information for the military  
21                 sexual trauma coordinator of the Veterans Benefits  
22                 Administration.

23          “(3) In this subsection:

24                 “(A) The term ‘individual who has experienced  
25                 military sexual trauma’ means—

1 “(i) an individual who has filed a claim for  
 2 compensation under chapter 11 of this title re-  
 3 lating to military sexual trauma;

4 “(ii) a veteran who has been awarded com-  
 5 pensation under such chapter relating to mili-  
 6 tary sexual trauma; or

7 “(iii) a member of the Armed Forces (in-  
 8 cluding a member of the National Guard or Re-  
 9 serves), a former member of the Armed Forces,  
 10 or a veteran who is receiving care from the De-  
 11 partment relating to military sexual trauma.

12 “(B) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ has the  
 13 meaning given that term in section 1166A(i) of this  
 14 title.

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

17 “(D) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means  
 18 the toll-free hotline for veterans established under  
 19 section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

20 **SEC. 206. STUDY ON TRAINING AND PROCESSING RELAT-**  
 21 **ING TO CLAIMS FOR DISABILITY COMPENSA-**  
 22 **TION RELATING TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAU-**  
 23 **MA.**

24 (a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Veterans  
 25 Affairs shall conduct a study on—

1 (1) the quality of training provided to personnel  
2 of the Department of Veterans Affairs who review  
3 claims for disability compensation under chapter 11  
4 of title 38, United States Code, for disabilities relat-  
5 ing to military sexual trauma; and

6 (2) the quality of the procedures of the Depart-  
7 ment for reviewing the accuracy of the processing of  
8 such claims.

9 (b) ELEMENTS.—The study required by subsection  
10 (a) shall include the following:

11 (1) With respect to the quality of training de-  
12 scribed in paragraph (1) of such subsection:

13 (A) Whether the Department ensures per-  
14 sonnel complete such training on time.

15 (B) Whether the training has resulted in  
16 improvements to the processing of claims de-  
17 scribed in such subsection and issue-based accu-  
18 racy.

19 (C) Such recommendations as the Sec-  
20 retary may have for improving the training.

21 (2) With respect to the quality of procedures  
22 described in paragraph (2) of such subsection:

23 (A) Whether the procedures of the Depart-  
24 ment for reviewing the accuracy of the proc-  
25 essing of claims described in such subsection

1           comport with generally accepted statistical  
2           methodologies to ensure reasonable accuracy of  
3           such reviews.

4           (B) Whether such procedures adequately  
5           include mechanisms to correct errors found in  
6           such reviews.

7           (C) A summary of quality assurance re-  
8           views and reports conducted as part of such  
9           procedures.

10          (D) Such recommendations as the Sec-  
11          retary may have for improving such procedures.

12          (c) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year  
13 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
14 shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the  
15 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the  
16 House of Representatives a report detailing the findings  
17 of the Secretary with respect to the study conducted under  
18 subsection (a).

19 **SEC. 207. ANNUAL SPECIAL FOCUS REVIEW OF CLAIMS FOR**  
20 **DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR DISABIL-**  
21 **ITIES RELATING TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAU-**  
22 **MA.**

23          (a) ANNUAL SPECIAL FOCUS REVIEW.—

24           (1) IN GENERAL.—Each year, the Under Sec-  
25          retary for Benefits of the Department of Veterans



1       Affairs shall conduct a special focus review on the  
2       accuracy of the processing of claims for disability  
3       compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United  
4       States Code, for disabilities relating to military sexual  
5       trauma.

6               (2) ELEMENTS.—Each review conducted under  
7       paragraph (1) shall include a review of the following:

8               (A) A statistically significant, nationally  
9       representative sample of all claims for benefits  
10      under the laws administered by the Secretary of  
11      Veterans Affairs relating to military sexual  
12      trauma filed during the fiscal year preceding  
13      the fiscal year in which the report is submitted.

14              (B) The accuracy of each decision made  
15      with respect to each claim described in subparagraph  
16      (A).

17              (C) The types of benefit entitlement errors  
18      found, disaggregated by category.

19              (D) Trends from year to year.

20              (E) Training completion rates for personnel  
21      of the Department who process claims  
22      described in paragraph (1).

23       (b) REPROCESSING OF CLAIMS.—If the Under Secretary  
24      finds, pursuant to a special focus review conducted  
25      under subsection (a)(1), that an error was made with re-

1 spect to the entitlement of a veteran to a benefit under  
2 the laws administered by the Secretary, the Secretary shall  
3 return the relevant claim of the veteran to the appropriate  
4 office of the Department for reprocessing to ensure that  
5 the veteran receives an accurate decision with respect to  
6 the claim.

7 (c) REPORT.—Section 5501(b) of the Johnny Isakson  
8 and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Bene-  
9 fits Improvement Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–315; 134  
10 Stat. 5048) is amended—

11 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “through  
12 2027” and inserting “until the date described in sec-  
13 tion 207(d) of the Servicemembers and Veterans  
14 Empowerment and Support Act of 2025”; and

15 (2) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the  
16 following new subparagraph:

17 “(I) The findings of the most recent spe-  
18 cial focus review conducted under subsection  
19 (a)(1) of section 207 of the Servicemembers  
20 and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act  
21 of 2025, including—

22 “(i) the elements under subsection  
23 (a)(2) of such section;

1 “(ii) the number of claims returned  
2 for reprocessing under subsection (b) of  
3 such section; and

4 “(iii) the number of claims described  
5 in clause (ii) for which the decision relat-  
6 ing to service-connection or entitlement to  
7 compensation changed as a result of re-  
8 processing the claim.”.

9 (d) SUNSET.—On the date that the Under Secretary  
10 determines, pursuant to special focus reviews conducted  
11 under paragraph (1) of subsection (a), that the accuracy  
12 rates under paragraph (2)(B) of such subsection have  
13 been 95 percent or greater for five consecutive years, sub-  
14 section (a)(1) shall cease to be in effect.

15 **SEC. 208. WORKGROUP ON MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR**  
16 **CLAIMS FOR DISABILITY COMPENSATION**  
17 **FOR DISABILITIES RELATING TO MILITARY**  
18 **SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the  
20 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-  
21 erans Affairs shall establish a workgroup on medical ex-  
22 aminations for claims for disability compensation under  
23 chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, for disabilities  
24 relating to military sexual trauma (in this section referred  
25 to as the “workgroup”).

1 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The workgroup shall be com-  
2 posed of the following:

3 (1) Staff of the operations center for military  
4 sexual trauma of the Department of Veterans Af-  
5 fairs who have experience reviewing the quality of  
6 medical examinations in support of claims for dis-  
7 ability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38,  
8 United States Code.

9 (2) Staff of the Medical Disability Examination  
10 Office of the Department.

11 (3) Veterans service officers who have experi-  
12 ence with claims described in subsection (a).

13 (4) Medical examiners who have experience with  
14 such claims.

15 (5) Staff of the Veterans Experience Office of  
16 the Department.

17 (6) Such other individuals as the Secretary con-  
18 siders appropriate.

19 (c) DUTIES.—Not later than 180 days after the date  
20 of the enactment of this Act, the Workgroup shall—

21 (1) review the quality of medical examinations  
22 described in subsection (a);

23 (2) review the feasibility of minimizing re-ex-  
24 aminations for conditions relating to military sexual  
25 trauma; and

1           (3) submit to the Under Secretary for Benefits  
2           of the Department and the Secretary recommenda-  
3           tions on how to—

4                   (A) eliminate re-traumatization of individ-  
5           uals who file claims described in subsection (a);  
6           and

7                   (B) reduce the overdevelopment of such  
8           claims.

9           (d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date  
10          of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit  
11          to Congress a report that includes the following:

12                   (1) The views of the workgroup on efforts by  
13          the Department to eliminate re-traumatization of in-  
14          dividuals who file claims described in subsection (a).

15                   (2) Legislative proposals to improve the experi-  
16          ence of such individuals in pursuing such claims.

17                   (3) The recommendations submitted under sub-  
18          section (c)(3).

19                   (4) The plan of the Under Secretary for Bene-  
20          fits of the Department and the Secretary to imple-  
21          ment such recommendations.

22          (e) REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than  
23          one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
24          Under Secretary for Benefits of the Department and the  
25          Secretary shall—

(1) review the recommendations submitted under subsection (c)(3); and

(2) implement the recommendations that, as determined by the Under Secretary and the Secretary, would improve the claims process for individuals who file claims described in subsection (a).

## **TITLE III—ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE**

### **SEC. 301. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR COUNSELING AND TREATMENT FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA TO INCLUDE ALL FORMER MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

Section 1720D of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “a physical assault” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “military sexual trauma.”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “was suffered” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “resulted from military sexual trauma.”; and

1           (2) by striking subsections (f) and (g) and in-  
2       serting the following new subsection (f):

3       “(f) In this section:

4           “(1) The term ‘former member of the Armed  
5       Forces’ means a person who served on active duty,  
6       active duty for training, or inactive duty training,  
7       and who was discharged or released therefrom under  
8       any condition that is not—

9           “(A) a discharge by court-martial, unless  
10       the Secretary determines an exception to the  
11       bar to benefits applies; or

12           “(B) a discharge subject to a bar to bene-  
13       fits under section 5303 of this title.

14       “(2) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ means,  
15       with respect to a member of the Armed Forces or  
16       former member of the Armed Forces, a physical as-  
17       sault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature,  
18       or sexual harassment which occurred while the mem-  
19       ber or former member was serving on duty, regard-  
20       less of duty status or line of duty determination (as  
21       that term is used in section 12323 of title 10).

22       “(3) The term ‘sexual harassment’ means unsol-  
23       icited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature  
24       which is threatening in character.”.

1 **SEC. 302. CONNECTION TO VETERANS HEALTH ADMINIS-**  
2 **TRATION WHEN A DISABILITY CLAIM RE-**  
3 **LATED TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA IS SUB-**  
4 **MITTED TO VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINIS-**  
5 **TRATION.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 14 days after the  
7 date on which a veteran submits a claim for disability com-  
8 pensation to the Veterans Benefits Administration for a  
9 disability related to military sexual trauma, the Secretary  
10 of Veterans Affairs shall send a communication to the vet-  
11 eran with the following information:

12 (1) The contact information for the nearest  
13 military sexual trauma coordinator for the veteran  
14 at the Veterans Benefits Administration and a de-  
15 scription of the assistance such coordinator can pro-  
16 vide.

17 (2) The contact information for the nearest  
18 military sexual trauma coordinator for the veteran  
19 at the Veterans Health Administration and a de-  
20 scription of the assistance such coordinator can pro-  
21 vide.

22 (3) The types of services that individuals who  
23 have experienced military sexual trauma are eligible  
24 to receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs,  
25 including the nearest locations, including the nearest



1 Vet Center, and the contact information for such  
2 services.

3 (4) The contact information for the Veterans  
4 Crisis Line established under section 1720F(h) of  
5 title 38, United States Code.

6 (5) Such other information on services, care, or  
7 resources for military sexual trauma as the Sec-  
8 retary determines appropriate.

9 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.—The term  
11 “military sexual trauma”—

12 (A) with respect to eligibility for health  
13 care, has the meaning given such term in sec-  
14 tion 1720D(f) of title 38, United States Code,  
15 as added by section 301; and

16 (B) with respect to eligibility for com-  
17 pensation, has the meaning given such term in  
18 section 1166A(i) of title 38, United States  
19 Code, as added by section 203(a).

20 (2) VET CENTER.—The term “Vet Center” has  
21 the meaning given that term in section 1712A(h) of  
22 title 38, United States Code.

1 **SEC. 303. CARE RELATING TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA**  
2 **FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO WITHDRAW FROM OR**  
3 **OTHERWISE DO NOT COMPLETE SERVICE AT**  
4 **SERVICE ACADEMIES.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-  
6 fairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, the  
7 Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Secretary of  
8 Transportation, shall ensure that each individual who  
9 withdraws from, or otherwise does not complete service at,  
10 a service academy is provided—

11 (1) information on the potential eligibility of  
12 such individual for care and counseling relating to  
13 military sexual trauma provided through the Depart-  
14 ment of Veterans Affairs; and

15 (2) the option to receive copies of—

16 (A) the individual's service treatment  
17 records or military personnel records that docu-  
18 ment military sexual trauma;

19 (B) reporting forms of the Department of  
20 Defense, the Department of Homeland Secu-  
21 rity, or the Department of Transportation on  
22 sexual assault or sexual harassment for which  
23 the individual was the victim; and

24 (C) any investigative reports into military  
25 sexual trauma that occurred during the individ-

1           ual’s service in the Armed Forces and for which  
2           the individual was the victim.

3       (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4           (1) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.—The term  
5       “military sexual trauma”—

6           (A) with respect to eligibility for health  
7           care, has the meaning given such term in sec-  
8           tion 1720D(f) of title 38, United States Code,  
9           as added by section 301; and

10          (B) with respect to eligibility for com-  
11          pensation, has the meaning given such term in  
12          section 1166A(i) of title 38, United States  
13          Code, as added by section 203(a).

14          (2) SERVICE ACADEMY.—The term “service  
15       academy” means any of the following:

16           (A) The United States Military Academy.

17           (B) The United States Naval Academy.

18           (C) The United States Air Force Academy.

19           (D) The United States Coast Guard Acad-  
20       emy.

21           (E) The United States Merchant Marine  
22       Academy.

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