

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4197

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a program under which the Secretary shall award grants to certain State entities to expand access to structured outdoor recreation programs for veterans that enhance veteran wellness, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 25, 2026

Mr. CRAMER (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Ms. SLOTKIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a program under which the Secretary shall award grants to certain State entities to expand access to structured outdoor recreation programs for veterans that enhance veteran wellness, 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 Outdoor Re-  
5       habilitation Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT OUTDOOR RECRE-**  
2 **ATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
4 shall establish a program under which the Secretary shall  
5 award grants to covered State entities to expand access  
6 to structured outdoor recreation programs for veterans  
7 that enhance veteran wellness.

8 (b) USE OF AMOUNTS.—A covered State entity  
9 awarded a grant under this section may use amounts  
10 under such grant as follows:

11 (1) To directly develop and administer an out-  
12 door recreation program for veterans.

13 (2) To contract with local outfitters, guides,  
14 nonprofit organizations, or community-based outdoor  
15 recreation providers to conduct such program.

16 (3) To develop partnerships to deliver struc-  
17 tured outdoor programming for veterans.

18 (4) To reduce financial barriers to participation  
19 in such program, including equipment, program fees,  
20 and reasonable transportation costs.

21 (5) To conduct outreach to veteran populations  
22 to raise awareness about such program.

23 (6) To expand an existing outdoor recreation  
24 program for veterans operated in the State.

1           (7) To coordinate with Federal agencies in-  
2       volved in land management with respect to such pro-  
3       gram, including the following:

4                   (A) The National Park Service.

5                   (B) The Bureau of Land Management.

6                   (C) The Forest Service.

7                   (D) The United States Fish and Wildlife  
8       Service.

9                   (E) The Army Corps of Engineers.

10       (c) COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION.—

11           (1) COLLABORATION.—The Secretary shall en-  
12       courage collaboration between covered State entities  
13       participating in the grant program under this sec-  
14       tion and the Federal agencies described in sub-  
15       section (b)(7) to—

16                   (A) expand access by veterans to outdoor  
17       spaces;

18                   (B) to reduce administrative barriers; and

19                   (C) to identify appropriate locations for or-  
20       ganized activities.

21       (2) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall en-  
22       courage covered State entities participating in the  
23       grant program under this section to coordinate with  
24       other covered State entities to maximize access by  
25       veterans to outdoor recreation opportunities.

1       (d) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—To receive a  
2 grant under this section, a covered State entity shall sub-  
3 mit to the Secretary an application therefor that includes  
4 the following:

5           (1) A plan for administering funds awarded  
6 under such grant.

7           (2) Criteria for selecting partners for the out-  
8 door recreation program or programs carried out by  
9 such entity.

10          (3) A certification that the outdoor recreation  
11 program or programs carried out by such entity  
12 meet qualification standards determined by the  
13 State.

14          (4) Methods for collecting data for participation  
15 in the outdoor recreation program or programs car-  
16 ried out by such entity.

17       (e) APPROVAL OF APPLICATION AND FUNDING  
18 AMOUNTS.—

19           (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of  
20 appropriations, each covered State entity that sub-  
21 mits an application meeting the requirements under  
22 subsection (d) for a grant under this section shall be  
23 approved to receive such grant in an amount of not  
24 less than \$200,000 for the applicable fiscal year.

1           (2) ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS.—If additional  
2       amounts are available for a fiscal year to carry out  
3       this section, those additional amounts shall be dis-  
4       tributed among the covered State entities for which  
5       an application under subsection (d) was approved  
6       under paragraph (1).

7       (f) REPORTS.—Not less frequently than annually,  
8       each covered State entity in receipt of a grant under this  
9       section shall submit to the Secretary a report that includes  
10      the following:

11           (1) Participation metrics regarding any outdoor  
12       recreation program carried out by such entity with  
13       amounts provided under such grant, including—

14                (A) the types of activities funded and part-  
15                nerships established under such program;

16                (B) the number of veterans served under  
17                such program;

18                (C) frequency of participation by veterans  
19                under such program; and

20                (D) demographic distribution of veterans  
21                participating in such program.

22       (2) Observations with respect to any outdoor  
23       recreation program carried out by such entity, in-  
24       cluding—

1 (A) self-reported changes in well-being of  
2 veterans;

3 (B) social connectedness indicators; and

4 (C) physical activity engagement.

5 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

6 (1) OUTDOOR RECREATION PROGRAM.—The  
7 term “outdoor recreation program” means a nature-  
8 based activity designed to improve the mental and  
9 physical well-being of veterans, including activities  
10 that promote physical engagement, peer connection,  
11 skill-building, or therapeutic benefit, and may in-  
12 clude adaptive or accessible activities designed to ac-  
13 commodate veterans with disabilities.

14 (2) COVERED STATE ENTITY.—The term “cov-  
15 ered State entity” means the primary agency of a  
16 State that is responsible for programs and services  
17 for veterans.

18 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
19 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans  
20 Affairs \$10,000,000 for each fiscal year to carry out this  
21 section.

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