

VETERANS SERVING VETERANS ACT OF 2018

JULY 24, 2018.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. ROE of Tennessee, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 5938]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 5938) to amend the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a vacancy and recruitment database to facilitate the recruitment of certain members of the Armed Forces to satisfy the occupational needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to establish and implement a training and certification program for intermediate care technicians in that Department, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

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The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018”.

**SEC. 2. RECRUITMENT DATABASE.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–46; 38 U.S.C. 701 note) is amended as follows:

(1) In subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter proceeding paragraph (1), by striking “a single database” and inserting “and maintain a single searchable database (to be known as the ‘Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs Recruitment Database’)”;

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon;

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(D) by adding after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

“(3) with respect to each vacant position under paragraphs (1) and (2)—

“(A) the military occupational specialty or skill that corresponds to the position, as determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense; and

“(B) each qualified member of the Armed Forces who may be recruited to fill the position before such qualified member of the Armed Forces has been discharged and released from active duty.”.

(2) By redesignating subsections (b), (c), and (d) as subsections (f), (g), and (h), respectively.

(3) By inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsections:

“(b) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—Subject to subsection (c), the database established under subsection (a) shall include, with respect to each qualified member of the Armed Forces, the following information:

“(1) The name and contact information of the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

“(2) The date on which the qualified member of the Armed Forces is expected to be discharged and released from active duty.

“(3) Each military occupational specialty currently or previously assigned to the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

“(c) AVAILABILITY.—Information in the database shall be available to offices, officials, and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the extent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate.

“(d) EXPEDITED HIRING PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall hire qualified members of the Armed Forces who apply for vacant positions listed in the database established under subsection (a) without regard to the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code.

“(e) RELOCATION BONUS.—The Secretary may authorize a relocation bonus, in an amount determined appropriate by the Secretary and subject to the same limitations as in the case of the authority provided under section 5753 of title 5, to any qualified member of the Armed Forces who has accepted a position listed in the database established under subsection (a).”.

(4) In subsection (g)(1), as redesignated in paragraph (2), by striking “subsection (b)” and inserting “subsection (g)”.

(5) In subsection (h), as redesignated in paragraph (2), by striking “of this Act” and inserting “of the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018, and annually thereafter”.

(6) By adding after subsection (h), as redesignated in paragraph (2), the following new subsection:

“(i) QUALIFIED MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘qualified member of the Armed Forces’ means a member of the Armed Forces—

“(1) described in section 1142(a) of title 10;

“(2) who elects to be listed in the database established under subsection (a); and

“(3) who has been determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, to have a military occupational specialty that corresponds to a vacant position described in subsection (a).”.

(b) **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a plan to implement, including a timeline, section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–46; 38 U.S.C. 701 note), as amended by this section.

**SEC. 3. INTERMEDIATE CARE TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement a program to train and certify covered veterans to work as intermediate care technicians in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) **LOCATIONS.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary shall establish centers at medical facilities of the Department selected by the Secretary for the purposes of carrying out the program under subsection (a).

(2) **SELECTION OF MEDICAL FACILITIES.**—In selecting a medical facility of the Department under this subsection to serve as a center, the Secretary shall consider—

(A) the experience and success of the facility in training intermediate care technicians; and

(B) the availability of resources of the facility to train intermediate care technicians.

(c) **COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “covered veteran” means a veteran whom the Secretary determines served as a basic health care technician while serving in the Armed Forces.

**SEC. 4. NO AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–46; 38 U.S.C. 701 note), as amended by section 2 of this Act, or to carry out section 3 of this Act. Such sections shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated for such purpose.

## PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 5938, as amended, the Veterans Serving Veterans Act, would alleviate staff shortages and provide employment opportunities in the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) for transitioning and separated servicemembers. Representative Jenniffer González-Colón of Puerto Rico introduced H.R. 5938 on May 23, 2018.

## BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

### *Section 2. Recruitment database*

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), which manages and oversees the VA healthcare system, is currently facing staffing shortages in many critical-need occupations nationwide.<sup>1</sup> These shortages exist for both clinical occupations, like physicians and nurses, and non-clinical positions, like human resource officers and law enforcement personnel.<sup>2</sup> They are exacerbated by the arduous hiring process utilized by VA, which often results in a significant time lag between the need for and the filling of a position.<sup>3</sup> In recognition of this, the Committee has taken a number of actions to improve VHA's ability to recruit and retain needed health professionals and support staff to fill shortage areas. For example, section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–46; 131 STAT. 958) established a recruiting data-

<sup>1</sup> VA Office of the Inspector General 18–01693–196, June 2018, “OIG Determination of Veterans Health Administration's Occupational Staffing Shortages,” <https://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-18-01693-196.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> United States Cong. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health. “*Healthy Hiring: Enabling VA to Recruit and Retain Quality Providers*” March 22, 2017. 115th Cong. 1st sess. Washington: GPO, 2017 (testimony of Robert Goldenkoff, Director, Strategic Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office)

base within VHA. The database lists each vacant position within VHA that VA determines is critical, is difficult to fill, or both. It also contains information on qualified individuals who applied for a position within VHA and were not chosen but could be qualified for similar positions elsewhere in VHA. The Committee's intent with establishing this database is to assist VHA in more quickly identifying potential qualified applicants for vacant positions.

Each year thousands of former servicemembers from all branches of the Armed Services separate from the Department of Defense (DOD).<sup>4</sup> Despite the extensive training and experience these transitioning servicemembers received while in the military, they often do not possess a civilian certificate allowing them to continue in the occupations for which they were trained once they have separated from DOD.<sup>5</sup> As a result, some experience a period of unemployment, as evidenced by a 2017 report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics which found that post-9/11 veterans had a higher unemployment rate (4.5 percent) when compared to non-veterans (4.1 percent).<sup>6</sup> Congress acted in the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (Public Law 112-56; 125 STAT. 713) to require federal agencies to treat servicemembers who are separating from the Armed Services within 120 days and applying for a position within a federal agency as veterans to encourage transitioning servicemembers to seek government employment. However, the Committee believes that establishing an improved process for VA to identify separating service members with skills sets and experience that match those needed within VHA will be useful to both overcoming VA's staffing challenges and assisting transitioning servicemembers. This is particularly important given that employment soon following separation from the military has been found to be beneficial for veterans from both a financial and psychological perspective.<sup>7</sup> Section 2 of the bill would require VA to identify military occupational specialties that correlate with positions that VA needs and to coordinate with DOD to identify soon-to-be separated servicemembers with those military occupational specialties and to add such servicemembers information to the recruiting database that Congress previously established.

### *Section 3. Intermediate care technician training program*

As established above, VA has a number of staffing shortages in critical-need clinical occupations.<sup>8</sup> The Committee believes that some of these shortages could be addressed by improved recruiting of transitioning servicemembers with relevant experience in the health professions. In 2014, VHA instituted a pilot program to recruit, train, and utilize veterans who served as medics in the military as Intermediate Care Technicians (ICTs) in VA medical facili-

<sup>4</sup> Brock, D, Bolon S, Wick K, et al: "The military veteran physician assistant pathway: building the primary care workforce." *Acad Med* 2013; 88(12): 1890-4

<sup>5</sup> Watts, B, Lawrence, RH, Schaub, K, et al: "Transitioning former military medics to civilian health care jobs: a novel pilot program to integrate medics into ambulatory care teams for high-risk patients." *Military Medicine* 2016; Vol 181 (November/December): 1464-69

<sup>6</sup> Employment Situation of Veterans—2017; Bureau of Labor Statistics report, March 22, 2018; <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/vet.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Blakely, T, Collins, S, Atkinson, J; "Unemployment and suicide. Evidence for a causal association?"; *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*; 2003; 57: 594-600

<sup>8</sup> VA Office of the Inspector General 18-01693-196, June 2018, "OIG Determination of Veterans Health Administration's Occupational Staffing Shortages," <https://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-18-01693-196.pdf>.

ties.<sup>9</sup> National survey data demonstrated a 100% satisfaction rate among veterans who were cared for by ICTs.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, a recent study at a VA medical facility demonstrated that ICTs working in VA emergency departments decreased per patient time by 40 minutes, suggesting that greater utilization of ICTs could result in greater access and higher productivity.<sup>11</sup> ICTs earn an annual salary of \$43,000.<sup>12</sup> An informal analysis by VA estimates that, if only 1% of the clinical shortages were filled with an ICT, VA could potentially realize savings of approximately \$40 million over five years.<sup>13</sup>

The Committee is fully supportive of veterans working in VA medical facilities as ICTs. As such, section 3 of the bill would require VA to implement an expanded program to recruit, train, and certify former military medics as ICTs. The Committee believes this will serve to reduce health professional shortages within VA, reduce veteran unemployment by allowing former DOD health care providers to utilize their training and experience after serving in the military, and improve veteran access to VA care.

#### HEARINGS

On June 13, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health conducted a legislative hearing on a number of bills including H.R. 5938.

The following witnesses testified:

The Honorable Vicky Hartzler, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th District, Missouri; The Honorable Marcy Kaptur, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th District, Ohio; The Honorable Matt Cartwright, U.S. House of Representatives, 17th District, Pennsylvania; The Honorable Clay Higgins, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd District, Louisiana; The Honorable Mike Bost, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th District, Illinois; The Honorable Jeff Denham, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th District, California; The Honorable Jenniffer González-Colón, U.S. House of Representatives, Puerto Rico; The Honorable Brad Wenstrup, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd District, Ohio; Roscoe Butler, Deputy Director for Health Care, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, The American Legion; Jeremy Villanueva, Associate National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Kayda Keleher, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and Jessica Bonjorni MBA, PMP, SPHR, Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Dayna Cooper MSN, RN, Director, Home and Community-Based Programs, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Statements for the record were submitted by:

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Veterans Affairs ICT informational Brief provided to House Committee on Veterans Affairs, January 16, 2018

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Federalpay.org; <https://www.federalpay.org/gs/2018/GS-7>; accessed 7-18-2018

<sup>13</sup> Data provided by Louis B. Stokes Veterans Affairs Medical Center to House Committee Veterans Affairs; January 22, 2018

American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Military Officers Association of America.

#### SUBCOMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On June 27, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open markup session, a quorum being present, and favorably forwarded H.R. 5938, as amended, to the Full Committee. During consideration of the bill, the following amendment was considered and agreed to by voice vote:

An amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Representative Jenniffer González-Colón of Puerto Rico, which would allow transitioning servicemembers to choose whether or not to include their contact information in VA's recruiting database.

#### COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On July 11, 2018, the full Committee met in open markup session, a quorum being present, and ordered H.R. 5938, as amended, to be reported favorably to the House of Representatives by voice vote.

#### COMMITTEE VOTES

In compliance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, there were no recorded votes taken on amendments or in connection with ordering H.R. 5938, as amended, reported to the House. A motion by Representative Tim Walz of Minnesota to report H.R. 5938, as amended, favorably to the House of Representatives was adopted by voice vote.

#### COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII and clause (2)(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report.

#### STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's performance goals and objectives are to authorize VA to develop a process to recruit current and former service members for employment within the VA healthcare system.

#### NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

In compliance with clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee adopts as its own the estimate of new budget authority, entitlement authority, or tax expenditures or revenues contained in the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

## EARMARKS AND TAX AND TARIFF BENEFITS

H.R. 5938, as amended, does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

## COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

The Committee adopts as its own the cost estimate on H.R. 5938, as amended, prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following is the cost estimate for H.R. 5938, as amended, provided by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974:

U.S. CONGRESS,  
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
*Washington, DC, July 18, 2018.*

Hon. PHIL ROE, M.D.,  
*Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 5938, the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Ann E. Futrell.

Sincerely,

MARK P. HADLEY  
(For Keith Hall, Director).

Enclosure.

*H.R. 5938—Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018*

H.R. 5938 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to expand its recruitment database, which identifies certain open positions at the department, to include the military occupational specialties that correspond to those open positions as well as contact information for qualified service members who could fill those positions. Such members would be those who are preparing to separate from the armed forces, whose occupational speciality in the military corresponds to an open position in the database, and who choose to be listed.

VA reports that it is currently in the process of targeting service members who are transitioning out of the military for positions at the department by using data contained in the VA/DoD Identity Repository database. Using information from VA and the Department of Defense (DoD), CBO expects that under the bill VA would hire two additional information technology specialists (at an average compensation of \$100,000) to add appropriate service-member data into the database. On that basis, CBO estimates that including applicants from DoD in VA's recruitment database would cost

\$1 million over the 2019–2023 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The bill also would require VA to train and certify veterans who served as health care technicians while serving in the armed forces to work as intermediate care technicians at the department. According to VA, the department already operates a training program for intermediate care technicians at 23 medical facilities and is in the process of expanding that training. Thus, the bill’s codification of that responsibility would not result in any additional costs.

Enacting H.R. 5938 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 5938 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2029.

H.R. 5938 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Ann E. Futrell. The estimate was reviewed by Leo Lex, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

#### FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates regarding H.R. 5938, as amended, prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act would be created by H.R. 5938, as amended.

#### STATEMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, H.R. 5938, as amended, is authorized by Congress’ power to “provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States.”

#### APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that H.R. 5938, as amended, does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

#### STATEMENT ON DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that no provision of H.R. 5938, as amended, establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.



## DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTED RULEMAKING

Pursuant to section 3(i) of H. Res. 5, 115th Cong. (2017), the Committee estimates that H.R. 5938, as amended, contains no directed rulemaking that would require the Secretary to prescribe regulations.

## SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

*Section 1. Short title*

Section 1 of the bill would provide a short title of the “Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018.”

*Section 2. Recruitment database*

Section 2(a) of the bill would amend section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act (Public Law 115–46) to require VA to identify military occupational specialties that correlate with positions that VA needs, to coordinate with DOD to identify soon to be separated servicemembers and, upon the election of the servicemember, to add those servicemembers’ military occupational specialties and contact information to VA’s existing recruiting database.

Section 2(b) of the bill requires the Secretary to submit, no later than 180 days after enactment, a plan, to include timeline, for implementation of this database requirement.

*Section 3. Intermediate care technician training program*

Section 3(a) of the bill would require VA to implement a program to train and certify covered veterans to work as VA ICTs.

Section 3(b) of the bill would require VA to establish centers at VA medical facilities selected by VA for the purpose of carrying out the program required by section 3(a) of the bill and require VA, in selecting a VA medical facility to serve as such a center, to consider the experience and success of the facility in training ICTs and the availability of resources to train ICTs.

Section 3(c) of the bill would define the term “covered veteran” to mean a veteran whom VA determines served as a basic health care technician while serving in the Armed Forces.

*Section 4. No authorization of appropriations*

Section 4 of the bill would establish that no additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act and that this Act is required to be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.

## CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in *italic*, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

## CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

**VA CHOICE AND QUALITY EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 2017**

\* \* \* \* \*

**TITLE II—PERSONNEL MATTERS**

\* \* \* \* \*

**SEC. 208. RECRUITING DATABASE AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish **[a single database]** and maintain a single searchable database (to be known as the “Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs Recruitment Database”) that lists—

(1) each vacant position in the Department of Veterans Affairs that the Secretary determines is critical to the mission of the Department, difficult to fill, or both **[; and]**;

(2) each vacant position in the Department of Veterans Affairs for a mental health professional **[.]**; and

(3) with respect to each vacant position under paragraphs (1) and (2)—

(A) the military occupational specialty or skill that corresponds to the position, as determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense; and

(B) each qualified member of the Armed Forces who may be recruited to fill the position before such qualified member of the Armed Forces has been discharged and released from active duty.

(b) **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**—Subject to subsection (c), the database established under subsection (a) shall include, with respect to each qualified member of the Armed Forces, the following information:

(1) The name and contact information of the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

(2) The date on which the qualified member of the Armed Forces is expected to be discharged and released from active duty.

(3) Each military occupational specialty currently or previously assigned to the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

(c) **AVAILABILITY.**—Information in the database shall be available to offices, officials, and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the extent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate.

(d) **EXPEDITED HIRING PROCEDURES.**—The Secretary shall hire qualified members of the Armed Forces who apply for vacant positions listed in the database established under subsection (a) without

regard to the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code.

(e) *RELOCATION BONUS.*—The Secretary may authorize a relocation bonus, in an amount determined appropriate by the Secretary and subject to the same limitations as in the case of the authority provided under section 5753 of title 5, to any qualified member of the Armed Forces who has accepted a position listed in the database established under subsection (a).

[(b)] (f) *QUALIFIED APPLICANT.*—If the Secretary determines that an applicant for a vacant position listed in the database established under subsection (a) is qualified for such position but does not select the applicant for such position, the Secretary, at the election of the applicant, may consider the applicant for other similar vacant positions listed in the database for which the applicant is qualified.

[(c)] (g) *PROLONGED VACANCIES.*—If the Secretary does not fill a vacant position listed in the database established under subsection (a) after a period determined appropriate by the Secretary, the Secretary—

(1) may ensure that applicants described in [subsection (b)] subsection (g) are considered for such position; and

(2) may use the database established under subsection (a) to assist in filling such position.

[(d)] (h) *REPORT.*—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment [of this Act] of the *Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018, and annually thereafter*, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the use and efficacy of the database established under subsection (a).

(i) *QUALIFIED MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES DEFINED.*—In this section, the term “qualified member of the Armed Forces” means a member of the Armed Forces—

(1) described in section 1142(a) of title 10;

(2) who elects to be listed in the database established under subsection (a); and

(3) who has been determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, to have a military occupational speciality that corresponds to a vacant position described in subsection (a).

\* \* \* \* \*