

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 335

To establish the Commission on the Future for America's Veterans.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON (for himself and Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To establish the Commission on the Future for America's  
Veterans.

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 "Commission on the  
5       Future for America's Veterans Act".

6       **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

7       There is established a commission to be known as the  
8       Commission on the Future for America's Veterans (here-  
9       inafter in this Act referred to as the "Commission").

1 **SEC. 3. MEMBERSHIP.**

2 (a) COMPOSITION.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be  
4 composed of 12 members appointed in accordance  
5 with paragraph (2) and 3 ex officio members des-  
6 ignated in paragraph (3).

7 (2) APPOINTED MEMBERS.—Members of the  
8 Commission shall be appointed as follows:

9 (A) The Speaker of the House of Rep-  
10 resentatives and the majority leader of the Sen-  
11 ate, acting jointly, in consultation with the  
12 chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Af-  
13 fairs of the Senate and the chairman of the  
14 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of  
15 Representatives, shall appoint four members.

16 (B) Eight members shall be appointed  
17 from among individuals who are not full-time  
18 officers or employees of the United States as  
19 follows:

20 (i) The chairman of the Committee on  
21 Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the  
22 ranking member of that committee shall  
23 each appoint one member.

24 (ii) The chairman of the Committee  
25 on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-  
26 resentatives and the ranking member of

1           that committee shall each appoint one  
2           member.

3           (iii) The chairman of the Committee  
4           on Armed Services of the Senate and the  
5           ranking member of that committee shall  
6           each appoint one member.

7           (iv) The chairman of the Committee  
8           on National Security of the House of Rep-  
9           resentatives and the ranking member of  
10          that committee shall each appoint one  
11          member.

12          (C) Members appointed under this para-  
13          graph shall have appropriate experience and ex-  
14          pertise on veterans, organizational, and man-  
15          agement matters, as well as on health care serv-  
16          ices available to veterans provided by the Sec-  
17          retary of Veterans Affairs, and to the maximum  
18          extent practicable, shall be veterans.

19          (3) EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.—The following shall  
20          serve as members of the Commission:

21               (A) The Under Secretary for Health of the  
22               Department of Veterans Affairs, or the Under  
23               Secretary's designee.

1 (B) The Assistant Secretary of Defense for  
2 Health Affairs of the Department of Defense,  
3 or the Assistant Secretary's designee.

4 (C) The Assistant Secretary for Planning  
5 and Evaluation of the Department of Health  
6 and Human Services, or the Assistant Sec-  
7 retary's designee.

8 (b) DESIGNATION OF THE CHAIRMAN.—The Speaker  
9 of the House of Representatives and the majority leader  
10 of the Senate, acting jointly, in consultation with the  
11 chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the  
12 Senate and the chairman of the Committee on Veterans'  
13 Affairs of the House of Representatives shall, from the  
14 members appointed under subsection (a)(1), designate the  
15 chairman of the Commission.

16 (c) TIME FOR APPOINTMENT, DESIGNATION.—The  
17 members of the Commission shall be appointed and the  
18 chairman of the Commission shall be designated not later  
19 than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

20 (d) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—

21 (1) PERIOD.—Members of the Commission shall  
22 be appointed for the life of the Commission.

23 (2) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Commis-  
24 sion shall not affect its powers and shall be filled in  
25 the same manner as the original appointment.

1 (e) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the  
2 Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser num-  
3 ber may hold hearings.

4 (f) MEETINGS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall meet  
6 at the call of the chairman of the Commission.

7 (2) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 30 days  
8 after the date on which all members of the Commis-  
9 sion have been appointed, the Commission shall hold  
10 its first meeting.

11 (g) MAJORITY VOTE.—The Commission may not sub-  
12 mit a legislative proposal or make a recommendation or  
13 report to Congress unless the proposal, recommendation  
14 or report is approved by a majority of the members of  
15 the Commission present and voting, a quorum being  
16 present.

17 (h) AUTHORITY OF INDIVIDUALS TO ACT FOR COM-  
18 MISSION.—Any member or agent of the Commission may,  
19 if authorized by the Commission, take any action which  
20 the Commission is authorized to take under this Act.

21 **SEC. 4. DUTIES.**

22 (a) STUDY.—The Commission shall conduct a com-  
23 prehensive study of health care services provided by the  
24 Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

1 (b) MATTERS STUDIED.—The matters studied by the  
2 Commission shall include—

3 (1) legislative proposals to improve delivery of  
4 health care to veterans, including H.R. 1767 of the  
5 104th Congress, H.R. 3117 of the 104th Congress,  
6 H.R. 3119 of the 104th Congress, and the G.I. Bill  
7 of Health (H.R. 3950 of the 104th Congress);

8 (2) alternative means for delivery of health care  
9 to a veteran (such as managed care); and

10 (3) eligibility reform.

11 (c) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT BILL.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
13 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
14 Commission shall submit to Congress a legislative  
15 proposal in the form of a draft bill (hereinafter in  
16 this Act referred to as a “demonstration project  
17 bill”).

18 (2) CONTENT OF BILL.—

19 (A) AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY.—A dem-  
20 onstration project bill shall authorize the Sec-  
21 retary of Veterans Affairs to implement tem-  
22 porary demonstration projects to improve health  
23 care services under the Department of Veterans  
24 Affairs.

1 (B) IMPLEMENTATION AT MEDICAL CEN-  
2 TERS.—A demonstration project bill shall pro-  
3 vide that the temporary demonstration projects  
4 be implemented at no fewer than 20 and no  
5 greater than 40 Department of Veterans Af-  
6 fairs medical centers specified in the dem-  
7 onstration project bill.

8 (C) SELECTION OF CENTERS.—In selecting  
9 the centers under subparagraph (B), the chair-  
10 man, in consultation with the Secretary of Vet-  
11 erans Affairs, shall assure a diversity of centers  
12 according to geographic areas, demographic  
13 characteristics of, and specialized medical serv-  
14 ices provided by individual centers.

15 (D) TERMINATION.—A demonstration  
16 project bill shall provide that the temporary  
17 demonstration projects terminate not later than  
18 18 months after the date of the enactment of  
19 the Act providing for such temporary dem-  
20 onstration projects.

21 (d) EVALUATION OF PROJECTS; AUDIT.—The Com-  
22 mission shall monitor and evaluate the temporary dem-  
23 onstration projects and shall arrange for audits of such  
24 projects.

1 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 15 months after the  
2 date of the enactment of the Act providing for the tem-  
3 porary demonstration projects under subsection (c), the  
4 chairman of the Commission shall submit to Congress a  
5 report which contains a detailed statement of the findings  
6 and conclusions of the Commission with respect to the  
7 temporary demonstration projects, together with rec-  
8 ommendations for such legislation and administrative ac-  
9 tion as the Commission considers appropriate.

10 **SEC. 5. EXPEDITED CONGRESSIONAL PROCEDURE.**

11 (a) PROCEDURE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-  
12 TIVES.—

13 (1) INTRODUCTION OF DEMONSTRATION  
14 PROJECT BILL.—A qualified demonstration project  
15 bill is one that is introduced by the majority leader  
16 of the House of Representatives for himself and the  
17 minority leader of the House of Representatives, or  
18 by Members designated jointly by the majority lead-  
19 er and the minority leader of the House of Rep-  
20 resentatives, not later than the close of the 15th day  
21 after the date on which such bill is submitted to the  
22 House of Representatives under section 4(c).

23 (2) COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION.—If a commit-  
24 tee to which a qualified demonstration project bill  
25 has been referred has not reported such bill at the



1 close of the 10th day after the date of the bill's in-  
2 troduction, such committee shall be automatically  
3 discharged from further consideration of the bill,  
4 and the bill shall be placed on the appropriate cal-  
5 endar.

6 (3) COMPUTATION OF DAYS.—For purposes of  
7 this subsection, in computing the number of days,  
8 there shall be excluded any day on which the House  
9 of Representatives is not in session.

10 (b) PROCEDURE IN THE SENATE.—

11 (c) RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
12 AND SENATE.—This section is enacted by the Congress—

13 (1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of  
14 the House of Representatives and the Senate, re-  
15 spectively, and as such it shall be considered as part  
16 of the rules of each House, respectively, or of that  
17 House to which it specifically applies, and such rules  
18 shall supersede other rules only to the extent that  
19 they are inconsistent therewith; and

20 (2) with full recognition of the constitutional  
21 right of either House to change the rules (so far as  
22 relating to such House) at any time, in the same  
23 manner and to the same extent as in the case of any  
24 other rule of that House.

1   **SEC. 6. POWERS.**

2           (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such  
3 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such  
4 testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission  
5 considers advisable to carry out the purposes of this Act.

6           (b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The  
7 chairman of the Commission may secure directly from any  
8 department or agency of the Federal Government such in-  
9 formation as the chairman of the Commission considers  
10 necessary to carry out the duties under this Act. Upon  
11 request of the chairman of the Commission, the head of  
12 such department or agency shall furnish such information  
13 expeditiously to the Commission.

14          (c) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Commission may  
15 contract with and compensate government and private  
16 agencies or persons for supplies or services, without regard  
17 to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5).

18   **SEC. 7. MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.**

19          (a) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use  
20 the United States mails in the same manner and under  
21 the same conditions as other departments and agencies of  
22 the Federal Government.

23          (b) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and  
24 dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

25          (c) MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—  
26 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of

1 Defense shall, upon the request of the chairman of the  
2 Commission, furnish the Commission, on a reimbursable  
3 basis, such administrative and support services as the  
4 Commission may require.

5 **SEC. 8. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

6 (a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-  
8 graph (2), each member of the Commission shall be  
9 compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent  
10 of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level  
11 IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of  
12 title 5, United States Code, for each day (including  
13 travel time) during which such member is engaged  
14 in performing the duties of the Commission.

15 (2) PROHIBITION OF COMPENSATION OF FED-  
16 ERAL EMPLOYEES.—Members of the Commission  
17 who are full-time officers or employees of the United  
18 States or Members of Congress may not receive ad-  
19 ditional pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of  
20 their service on the Commission.

21 (b) TRAVEL.—Members and personnel of the Com-  
22 mission may travel on military aircraft, military vehicles,  
23 or other military conveyances when travel is necessary in  
24 the performance of a duty of the Commission except when  
25 the cost of commercial transportation is less expensive.

1 (c) STAFF.—

2 (1) APPOINTMENT.—The chairman of the Com-  
3 mission may appoint, without regard to civil service  
4 laws and regulations, an executive director and such  
5 additional personnel as may be necessary to carry  
6 out the duties of the Commission.

7 (2) PREFERENCE TO VETERANS.—

8 (A) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The executive  
9 director of the Commission shall be a veteran.

10 (B) ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL.—In ap-  
11 pointing additional personnel to the Commis-  
12 sion, the chairman shall give preference to vet-  
13 erans.

14 (3) COMPENSATION OF STAFF.—The chairman  
15 of the Commission may fix the compensation of the  
16 executive director and additional personnel without  
17 regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and sub-  
18 chapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States  
19 Code, relating to classification of positions and Gen-  
20 eral Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay  
21 for the executive director and additional personnel  
22 may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the  
23 Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

24 (d) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Upon  
25 request of the chairman of the Commission, the head of

1 any department or agency of the Federal Government may  
 2 detail, on a nonreimbursable basis, any personnel of the  
 3 department or agency to the Commission to assist the  
 4 Commission in carrying out its duties under this Act.

5 (e) **PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-**  
 6 **TENT SERVICES.**—The chairman of the Commission may  
 7 procure temporary and intermittent services under section  
 8 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individ-  
 9 uals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual  
 10 rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive  
 11 Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

12 **SEC. 9. FUNDING.**

13 Of the amounts appropriated for the Department of  
 14 Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 1997 or subsequent fiscal  
 15 years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make avail-  
 16 able to the Commission such amounts as the chairman of  
 17 the Commission certifies to the Secretary as necessary for  
 18 the Commission to carry out its duties under this Act.

19 **SEC. 10. TERMINATION.**

20 The Commission shall terminate 30 days after the  
 21 date of the termination of the temporary demonstration  
 22 projects under section 4(c).

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