

109TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1342

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

---

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 30, 2005

Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself and Mrs. LINCOLN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

---

## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 Outreach Im-  
5 provement Act of 2005”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF OUTREACH.**

7 Section 101 of title 38, United States Code, is  
8 amended by adding at the end the following new para-  
9 graph:

1       “(34) The term ‘outreach’ means the act or process  
 2 of reaching out in a systematic manner to proactively pro-  
 3 vide information, services, and benefits counseling to vet-  
 4 erans, and to the spouses, children, and parents of vet-  
 5 erans who may be eligible to receive benefits under the  
 6 laws administered by the Secretary, to ensure that such  
 7 individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in apply-  
 8 ing for, any benefits and programs under such laws.”.

9       **SEC. 3. AUTHORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCE-**  
 10                               **MENT OF OUTREACH OF ACTIVITIES DEPART-**  
 11                               **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

12       (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 5 of title 38, United  
 13 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
 14 lowing new subchapter:

15                               “SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH

16       **“§ 561. Outreach activities: funding**

17       “(a) SEPARATE ACCOUNT FOR OUTREACH ACTIVI-  
 18 TIES.—The Secretary shall establish a separate account  
 19 for the funding of the outreach activities of the Depart-  
 20 ment, and shall establish within such account a separate  
 21 subaccount for the funding of the outreach activities of  
 22 each element of the Department specified in subsection  
 23 (c).

24       “(b) BUDGET REQUIREMENTS.—In the budget jus-  
 25 tification materials submitted to Congress in support of



1           “(5) The National Cemetery Administration.

2           “(b) REVIEW AND MODIFICATION.—The Secretary  
3 shall—

4           “(1) periodically review the procedures main-  
5 tained under subsection (a) for the purpose of ensur-  
6 ing that such procedures meet the requirement in  
7 that subsection; and

8           “(2) make such modifications to such proce-  
9 dures as the Secretary considers appropriate in light  
10 of such review in order to better achieve that pur-  
11 pose.

12 **“§ 563. Outreach activities: cooperative activities**  
13 **with States; grants to States for improve-**  
14 **ment of outreach**

15           “(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to  
16 assist States in carrying out programs that offer a high  
17 probability of improving outreach and assistance to vet-  
18 erans, and to the spouses, children, and parents of vet-  
19 erans who may be eligible to receive veterans’ or veterans’-  
20 related benefits, to ensure that such individuals are fully  
21 informed about, and assisted in applying for, any veterans’  
22 and veterans’-related benefits and programs (including  
23 under State veterans’ programs).

24           “(b) LOCATION OF PROVISION OF OUTREACH.—The  
25 Secretary shall ensure that outreach and assistance is pro-

1 vided under programs referred to in subsection (a) in loca-  
2 tions proximate to populations of veterans and other indi-  
3 viduals referred to in that subsection, as determined uti-  
4 lizing criteria for determining the proximity of such popu-  
5 lations to veterans health care services.

6 “(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH STATES.—  
7 The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements and  
8 arrangements with veterans agencies of the States in order  
9 to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance  
10 outreach by the Department and the States (including  
11 outreach with respect to State veterans’ programs).

12 “(d) GRANTS.—(1) The Secretary may award grants  
13 to veterans agencies of States in order to achieve purposes  
14 as follows:

15 “(A) To carry out, coordinate, improve, or oth-  
16 erwise enhance outreach, including activities pursu-  
17 ant to cooperative agreements and arrangements  
18 under subsection (c).

19 “(B) To carry out, coordinate, improve, or oth-  
20 erwise enhance activities to assist in the development  
21 and submittal of claims for veterans’ and veterans’-  
22 related benefits, including activities pursuant to co-  
23 operative agreements and arrangements under sub-  
24 section (c).

1       “(2) A veterans agency of a State receiving a grant  
 2 under this subsection may use the grant amount for pur-  
 3 poses described in paragraph (1) or award all or any por-  
 4 tion of such grant amount to local governments in such  
 5 State, other public entities in such State, or private non-  
 6 profit organizations in such State for such purposes.

7       “(e) FUNDING.—Amounts available for the Depart-  
 8 ment for outreach in the account under section 561 of this  
 9 title shall be available for activities under this section, in-  
 10 cluding grants under subsection (d).”.

11       (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
 12 at the beginning of chapter 5 of such title is amended by  
 13 adding at the end the following new items

“SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH

“561. Outreach activities: funding.

“562. Outreach activities: coordination of activities within Department.

“563. Outreach activities: cooperative activities with States; grants to States for  
 improvement of outreach.”.

