

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1853

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that Department of Veterans Affairs police officers receive training to interact with visitors and patients at Department medical facilities who are suffering from mental illness.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 29, 2007

Ms. WATSON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that Department of Veterans Affairs police officers receive training to interact with visitors and patients at Department medical facilities who are suffering from mental illness.

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 “Jose Medina Veterans
5 Affairs Police Training Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) On September 30, 2006, there were an esti-
2 mated 24,000,000 living veterans.

3 (2) 7.8 percent of the total estimated resident
4 population of the United States and Puerto Rico are
5 recipients, or potential recipients, of veterans' bene-
6 fits from the Federal Government.

7 (3) For fiscal year 2008, it is estimated that
8 there will be 5,800,000 veterans seeking medical
9 care from the Federal Government, and that
10 2,800,000 veterans will receive compensation for
11 service-related conditions.

12 (4) These veterans may potentially seek medical
13 assistance by directly contacting a Department of
14 Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

15 (5) According to a 2003 study conducted by the
16 United States Army, 15 to 20 percent of veterans of
17 the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are showing
18 symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (in this
19 Act referred to as "PTSD").

20 (6) Studies show that members of the reserve
21 components are particularly vulnerable to PTSD,
22 and females face a higher risk for PTSD than do
23 males.

24 (7) Approximately 20 to 25 percent of the
25 women who served in Vietnam and in the Persian

1 Gulf War developed PTSD, and psychologists are
2 expecting figures to be at least as high for Operation
3 Iraqi Freedom.

4 (8) According to figures released by the Depart-
5 ment of Defense, more than 1,000,000 American
6 troops have served thus far in the conflicts in Iraq
7 and Afghanistan, and some experts predict that the
8 number eventually requiring mental health treat-
9 ment could exceed 100,000.

10 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

11 It is the sense of Congress that while the United
12 States is conducting combat operations in Afghanistan
13 and Iraq, the Department of Veterans Affairs should bet-
14 ter prepare its police force to interact with patients and
15 visitors at Department medical facilities who suffer from
16 mental illness.

17 **SEC. 4. TRAINING FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
18 **FAIRS POLICE OFFICERS TO INTERACT WITH**
19 **INDIVIDUALS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL ILL-**
20 **NESS.**

21 (a) TRAINING FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-
22 FAIRS POLICE OFFICERS TO INTERACT WITH INDIVID-
23 UALS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL ILLNESS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 9 of title 38, United
 2 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
 3 following new section:

4 **“§ 906. Training for Department police officers to**
 5 **interact with individuals suffering from**
 6 **mental illness**

7 “The Secretary shall ensure that all Department po-
 8 lice officers receive training on how to interact with visi-
 9 tors and patients at Department medical facilities who are
 10 suffering from, or who exhibit symptoms of, mental ill-
 11 ness.”.

12 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
 13 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
 14 by adding at the end the following new item:

“906. Training for Department police officers to interact with individuals suf-
 fering from mental illness.”.

15 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Secretary shall imple-
 16 ment section 906 of title 38, United States Code, as added
 17 by subsection (a), not later than 8 months after the date
 18 of the enactment of this Act.

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