

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2257

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of benefits claims representatives employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and to ensure that there are not fewer than two such claims representatives located at each center for the provision of readjustment counseling and related mental health services established under section 1712A of title 38, United States Code (commonly referred to as a “vet center”), to help reduce the backlog of claims pending with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 9, 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

A BILL

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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. CLAIMS REPRESENTATIVES TO BE LOCATED AT**
4 **VET CENTERS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
6 shall increase the number of benefits claims representa-
7 tives employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs by
8 a number that is not fewer than two such representatives
9 for each center for the provision of readjustment coun-
10 seling and related mental health services established under
11 section 1712A of title 38, United States Code (in this Act
12 referred to as a “vet center”). The Secretary shall ensure
13 that there are not fewer than two benefits claims rep-
14 resentatives located at each vet center.

15 (b) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Secretary shall ensure
16 that benefits claims representatives employed by the De-
17 partment shall, at a minimum, have adequate knowledge
18 of the benefits claims process in order to—

19 (1) receive applications for benefits from vet-
20 erans;

21 (2) assist veterans in preparing and submitting
22 such applications;

23 (3) assess the need for and inform veterans of
24 additional documents or information required to be

1 provided by the veterans with respect to such appli-
2 cations; and

3 (4) inform veterans of the status of such sub-
4 mitted applications.

5 (c) ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.—Subject to the avail-
6 ability of appropriations for such purpose, the Secretary
7 shall direct additional resources to more hours of social
8 worker and mental health time, more staff to keep vet cen-
9 ters open longer hours, and the provision of links to job
10 centers and training.

11 (d) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall implement the
12 requirements of subsection (a) as soon as practicable and
13 not later than one year after the date of the enactment
14 of this Act.

15 (e) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than one
16 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every
17 year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a
18 report containing the following information:

19 (1) The effect of the additional claims rep-
20 resentatives located at vet centers on the claims
21 backlog.

22 (2) The caseloads of such additional claims rep-
23 resentatives.

24 (3) The estimated claims backlog at the time of
25 the report.

- 1 (4) Recommendations to further reduce the
- 2 claims backlog and otherwise facilitate the claims
- 3 process.

