

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1205

To require a pilot program on assisting veterans service organizations and other veterans groups in developing and promoting peer support programs that facilitate community reintegration of veterans returning from active duty, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 25, 2007

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

A BILL

To require a pilot program on assisting veterans service organizations and other veterans groups in developing and promoting peer support programs that facilitate community reintegration of veterans returning from active duty, 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. PILOT PROGRAM ON ASSISTING VETERANS OR-**
4 **GANIZATIONS IN FACILITATING COMMUNITY**
5 **REINTEGRATION OF VETERANS.**

6 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
2 Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to dem-
3 onstrate and assess the feasibility and advisability of
4 delivering community reintegration support and
5 services to veterans by assisting veterans organiza-
6 tions in developing and promoting peer support pro-
7 grams for veterans.

8 (2) DESIGNATION.—The pilot program required
9 by paragraph (1) shall be known as the “Heroes
10 Helping Heroes Program”.

11 (b) DURATION OF PROGRAM.—The pilot program
12 shall be carried out during the three-year period beginning
13 on October 1, 2007.

14 (c) SELECTION OF PILOT PROGRAM PARTICI-
15 PANTS.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall select
17 not more than 20 eligible entities to participate in
18 the pilot program.

19 (2) APPLICATION.—Each eligible entity seeking
20 to participate in the pilot program shall submit an
21 application to the Secretary at such time, in such
22 manner, and accompanied by such information as
23 the Secretary shall require.

24 (3) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select
25 participants in the pilot program from among the

1 applicants under paragraph (1) that the Secretary
2 determines—

3 (A)(i) have existing peer support programs
4 that can be expanded or enhanced, and re-
5 sources, for the delivery of community re-
6 integration support and services to veterans (in-
7 cluding mentoring programs, self-help groups,
8 and Internet and other electronic-based peer
9 support resources) that are suitable for the
10 pilot program; or

11 (ii) have the capacity, including the skill
12 and resources necessary, to develop and main-
13 tain new peer support programs for the delivery
14 of community reintegration support and serv-
15 ices (including mentoring programs, self-help
16 groups, and Internet and other electronic-based
17 peer support resources) that are suitable for the
18 pilot program; and

19 (B) have a plan to continue such peer sup-
20 port programs after the pilot program ends.

21 (d) GRANTS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award
23 grants to pilot program participants to develop and
24 promote peer support programs that deliver commu-
25 nity reintegration support and services for veterans.

1 (2) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall ensure that
2 the average amount of the grant awarded under
3 paragraph (1) to a pilot program participant is not
4 more than \$300,000 and not less than \$100,000 per
5 fiscal year.

6 (3) MATCHING FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant
7 under paragraph (1) shall contribute towards the de-
8 velopment and promotion of peer support programs
9 that deliver community reintegration support and
10 services to veterans an amount equal to not less
11 than ten percent of the grant awarded to such re-
12 cipient.

13 (4) DURATION.—The duration of any grant
14 awarded under paragraph (1) may not exceed three
15 years.

16 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—A grant awarded to a pilot pro-
17 gram participant pursuant to subsection (d) shall be used
18 by the pilot program participant for costs and expenses
19 connected with the development and promotion of peer
20 support programs that deliver community reintegration
21 support and services to veterans, including costs and ex-
22 penses of the following:

23 (1) Program staff or a coordinator of volun-
24 teers, but not more than 50 percent of such grant

1 award may be used for such purpose in any fiscal
2 year of such pilot program.

3 (2) Consultation services, but not more than 20
4 percent of such grant award may be used for such
5 purpose in any fiscal year of such pilot program.

6 (3) Program operations, including costs and ex-
7 penses relating to the following:

8 (A) Advertising and recruiting.

9 (B) Printing.

10 (C) Training of volunteers, veterans, and
11 staff.

12 (D) Incentives, such as food and awards.

13 (E) Overhead expenses, but not more than
14 ten percent of such grant award may be used
15 for such purposes.

16 (f) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—In addition to the
17 award of grants under subsection (d), the Secretary shall
18 provide technical assistance to pilot program participants
19 to assist them in developing and promoting peer support
20 programs that deliver community reintegration support
21 and services to veterans.

22 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
24 ty” means—

25 (A) a veterans service organization;

1 (B) a not-for-profit organization—

2 (i) the primary mission of which is to
3 assist veterans;

4 (ii) that has been in continuous oper-
5 ation for at least 12 months; and

6 (iii) is not a veterans service organiza-
7 tion; or

8 (C) a partnership between an organization
9 described in subparagraph (A) or (B) and an
10 organization that is not described in subpara-
11 graph (A) or (B).

12 (2) PILOT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT.—The term
13 “pilot program participant” means an eligible entity
14 that is selected by the Secretary, in accordance with
15 subsection (c), to participate in the pilot program
16 under this section.

17 (3) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The
18 term “veterans service organization” means any or-
19 ganization recognized by the Secretary for the rep-
20 resentation of veterans under section 5902 of title
21 38, United States Code.

22 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
23 are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of

- 1 Veterans Affairs to carry out this section, \$4,500,000 for
- 2 each of fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010.

