

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2583

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve health care for women veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2009

Mr. BOSWELL (for himself, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. LOEBSACK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve health care for women veterans, 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 “Women Veterans Ac-
5 cess to Care Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) As of 2008, 15 percent of members of the
9 Armed Forces are women.

1 (2) As of 2008, one of every 10 members of the
2 Armed Forces serving in Iraq is a woman.

3 (3) As of 2006, more than 16,000 single moth-
4 ers have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

5 (4) As of 2008, an estimated one-third of
6 women veterans who have sought counseling at the
7 Department of Veterans Affairs report having been
8 the victim of rape or attempted rape during their
9 service.

10 (5) As of 2008, women are the fastest growing
11 group within the veteran population.

12 (6) As of 2008, 11 percent of Operation Endur-
13 ing Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans
14 were women.

15 (7) As of 2006, more than 155,000 women have
16 served in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation
17 Iraqi Freedom.

18 (8) As of 2008, nearly half of all women vet-
19 erans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom or
20 Operation Iraqi Freedom have enrolled with Depart-
21 ment of Veterans Affairs health care.

1 **SEC. 3. EMPHASIS ON HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN VET-**
2 **ERANS.**

3 (a) EMPHASIS.—In providing health care services to
4 women veterans, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
5 ensure that an emphasis is placed on the following:

6 (1) With respect to physical health, conditions
7 including—

8 (A) sexual reproductive health;

9 (B) preventative medicine and early detec-
10 tion of problems;

11 (C) sexual trauma;

12 (D) special needs of women with pros-
13 thetics;

14 (E) rehabilitation; and

15 (F) other conditions the Secretary con-
16 siders appropriate.

17 (2) With respect to mental health, issues in-
18 cluding—

19 (A) stress reduction (including the reduc-
20 tion of stress associated with balancing chil-
21 dren, family, and work responsibilities);

22 (B) services for depression, anxiety, post-
23 traumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse;

24 (C) conflict resolution; and

25 (D) other issues the Secretary considers
26 appropriate.

1 (3) Improving health-related telecommuni-
2 cations technologies.

3 (4) Providing care to women veterans who—

4 (A) served in Operation Enduring Free-
5 dom or Operation Iraqi Freedom;

6 (B) live in a rural location; or

7 (C) are homebound or elderly.

8 (5) With respect to health professionals em-
9 ployed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, issues
10 including—

11 (A) hiring health professionals who are
12 specialists in fields related to women's health;
13 and

14 (B) offering additional training on special
15 issues regarding women veterans.

16 (b) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct a study on
17 health care for women veterans. Such study shall—

18 (1) identify the main causes of stress among
19 women veterans;

20 (2) determine the most effective method to re-
21 duce such stress; and

22 (3) evaluate the various private and public
23 health care systems in which women veterans receive
24 care (including mental health care).

1 (c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
2 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
3 to Congress a report containing—

4 (1) an evaluation of the activities conducted by
5 the Secretary pursuant to subsection (a);

6 (2) the findings of the study required by sub-
7 section (b); and

8 (3) such recommendations for legislative or ad-
9 ministrative action the Secretary considers appro-
10 priate to improve health care for women veterans.

11 **SEC. 4. OUTREACH TO WOMEN VETERANS AND FAMILIES.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
13 shall carry out an outreach program to provide women vet-
14 erans and families of such veterans with information con-
15 cerning the following:

16 (1) The various resources available to such vet-
17 erans and families, including mental and behavioral
18 resources.

19 (2) The conditions and issues such veterans
20 may experience, including those described under sec-
21 tion 3(a).

22 (3) The challenges that family members of such
23 veterans, especially spouses and children, may expe-
24 rience.

1 (b) AUTHORITY TO CONTRACT.—The Secretary may
2 enter into a contract with a public or private entity to
3 carry out this section.

○