

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3349

To amend title 38, United States Code, and the United States Housing Act of 1937 to enhance and expand the assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 27, 2012

Mr. REED introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, and the United States Housing Act of 1937 to enhance and expand the assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness, 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 “Zero Tolerance for
5 Veterans Homelessness Act of 2012”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) Veterans are at a greater risk of becoming
4 homeless than other people in the United States be-
5 cause of characteristics that include the following:

6 (A) Having employment-related skills that
7 are unique to military service and that can be
8 difficult to transfer to the civilian sector.

9 (B) Combat-related health issues.

10 (C) Earning minimal income or being un-
11 employed.

12 (D) A shortage of safe, affordable housing.

13 (2) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs estimates
14 the following:

15 (A) More than 67,000 veterans are home-
16 less on any given night.

17 (B) About 145,000 veterans experience
18 homelessness each year.

19 (C) Veterans account for nearly $\frac{1}{5}$ of all
20 homeless people in the United States.

21 (3) It is expected that significant increases in
22 services will be needed to serve the aging veterans
23 of the Vietnam War and members of the Armed
24 Forces returning from service in Iraq and Afghani-
25 stan.

1 (4) In 2009, the President and the Secretary of
2 Veterans Affairs announced the Federal Govern-
3 ment’s renewed efforts to address veteran homeless-
4 ness.

5 **SEC. 3. ENHANCEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE PRO-**
6 **GRAMS.**

7 (a) **ENHANCEMENT OF GRANTS.**—Section 2011 of
8 title 38, United States Code, is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (b)(1)(A), by striking “expan-
10 sion, remodeling, or alteration of existing buildings,
11 or acquisition of facilities,” and inserting “new con-
12 struction of facilities, expansion, remodeling, or al-
13 teration of existing facilities, or acquisition of facili-
14 ties,”; and

15 (2) in subsection (c)—

16 (A) in the first sentence, by striking “A
17 grant” and inserting “(1) A grant”;

18 (B) in the second sentence of paragraph
19 (1), as designated by subparagraph (A), by
20 striking “The amount” and inserting the fol-
21 lowing:

22 “(2) The amount”; and

23 (C) by adding at the end the following new
24 paragraph:

1 “(3)(A) The Secretary may not deny an application
2 from an entity that seeks a grant under this section to
3 carry out a project described in subsection (b)(1)(A) solely
4 on the basis that the entity proposes to use funding from
5 other private or public sources, if the entity demonstrates
6 that a private nonprofit organization will provide oversight
7 and site control for the project.

8 “(B) In this paragraph, the term ‘private nonprofit
9 organization’ means the following:

10 “(i) An incorporated private institution, organi-
11 zation, or foundation—

12 “(I) that has received, or has temporary
13 clearance to receive, tax-exempt status under
14 paragraph (2), (3), or (19) of section 501(c) of
15 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

16 “(II) for which no part of the net earnings
17 of the institution, organization, or foundation
18 inures to the benefit of any member, founder,
19 or contributor of the institution, organization,
20 or foundation; and

21 “(III) that the Secretary determines is fi-
22 nancially responsible.

23 “(ii) A for-profit limited partnership or limited
24 liability company, the sole general partner or man-

ager of which is an organization that is described by
subclauses (I) through (III) of clause (i).

“(iii) A corporation wholly owned and controlled
by an organization that is described by subclauses
(I) through (III) of clause (i).”.

(b) GRANT AND PER DIEM PAYMENTS.—

(1) STUDY AND DEVELOPMENT OF FISCAL CON-
TROLS AND PAYMENT METHOD.—Not later than 1
year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) complete a study of all matters relat-
ing to the method used by the Secretary to
make per diem payments under section 2012(a)
of title 38, United States Code, including
changes anticipated by the Secretary in the cost
of furnishing services to homeless veterans and
accounting for costs of providing such services
in various geographic areas;

(B) develop more effective and efficient
procedures for fiscal control and fund account-
ing by recipients of grants under sections 2011,
2012, and 2061 of such title; and

(C) develop a more effective and efficient
method for adequately reimbursing recipients of

1 grants under section 2011 of such title for serv-
2 ices furnished to homeless veterans.

3 (2) CONSIDERATION.—In developing the meth-
4 od required by paragraph (1)(C), the Secretary may
5 consider payments and grants received by recipients
6 of grants described in such paragraph from other
7 departments and agencies of Federal and local gov-
8 ernments and from private entities.

9 (3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the
10 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
11 shall submit to Congress a report on—

12 (A) the findings of the Secretary with re-
13 spect to the study required by subparagraph
14 (A) of paragraph (1);

15 (B) the methods developed under subpara-
16 graphs (B) and (C) of such paragraph; and

17 (C) any recommendations of the Secretary
18 for revising the method described in subpara-
19 graph (A) of such paragraph and any legislative
20 action the Secretary considers necessary to im-
21 plement such method.

1 **SEC. 4. SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS IN OF-**
 2 **FICE OF SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND**
 3 **URBAN DEVELOPMENT.**

4 Section 4 of the Department of Housing and Urban
 5 Development Act (42 U.S.C. 3533) is amended by adding
 6 at the end the following new subsection:

7 “(h) SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR VETERANS AF-
 8 FAIRS.—

9 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There shall be in the
 10 Department a Special Assistant for Veterans Af-
 11 fairs, who shall be in the Office of the Secretary.

12 “(2) APPOINTMENT.—The Special Assistant for
 13 Veterans Affairs shall be appointed by the Secretary,
 14 based solely on merit and shall be covered under the
 15 provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing
 16 appointments in the competitive service.

17 “(3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Special Assist-
 18 ant for Veterans Affairs shall be responsible for—

19 “(A) ensuring that veterans have access to
 20 housing and homeless assistance under each
 21 program of the Department providing such as-
 22 sistance;

23 “(B) coordinating all programs and activi-
 24 ties of the Department relating to veterans;

1 “(C) serving as a liaison for the Depart-
2 ment with the Department of Veterans Affairs;
3 and

4 “(D) carrying out such other duties as
5 may be assigned to the Special Assistant by the
6 Secretary or by law.”.

7 **SEC. 5. PLAN TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
9 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
10 erans Affairs shall submit to Congress a comprehensive
11 plan to end homelessness among veterans.

12 (b) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by subsection (a)
13 shall include the following:

14 (1) An analysis of programs of the Department
15 of Veterans Affairs and other departments and
16 agencies of the Federal Government that are de-
17 signed to prevent homelessness among veterans and
18 assist veterans who are homeless.

19 (2) An evaluation of whether and how coordina-
20 tion between the programs described in paragraph
21 (1) would contribute to ending homelessness among
22 veterans.

23 (3) Recommendations for improving the pro-
24 grams described in paragraph (1), enhancing coordi-

1 nation between such programs, or eliminating pro-
2 grams that are no longer effective.

3 (4) Recommendations for new programs to pre-
4 vent and end homelessness among veterans, includ-
5 ing an estimation of the cost of such programs.

6 (5) A timeline for implementing the plan, in-
7 cluding milestones to track the implementation of
8 the plan.

9 (6) Benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of
10 the plan and the efforts of the Secretary to imple-
11 ment the plan.

12 (7) Such other matters as the Secretary con-
13 siders necessary.

14 (c) CONSIDERATION OF VETERANS LOCATED IN
15 RURAL AREAS.—The analysis, evaluation, and rec-
16 ommendations included in the report required by sub-
17 section (a) shall include consideration of the circumstances
18 and requirements that are unique to veterans located in
19 rural areas.

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