

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5686

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans program to seek to employ physicians at the Department of Veterans Affairs on a without compensation basis in practice areas and specialties with staffing shortages and long appointment waiting times.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 12, 2014

Mr. CULBERSON (for himself and Mr. O’ROURKE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans program to seek to employ physicians at the Department of Veterans Affairs on a without compensation basis in practice areas and specialties with staffing shortages and long appointment waiting times.

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 “Physician Ambas-
5 sadors Helping Veterans Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PHYSICIAN AMBASSADORS HELPING VETERANS**
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 74 of title
4 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after sec-
5 tion 7405 the following new section:

6 **“§ 7405A. Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans**
7 **program**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall seek to use
9 the authority under section 7405 of this title to employ
10 physicians on a without compensation basis in any prac-
11 tice area or speciality for which—

12 “(1) the average waiting time for veterans seek-
13 ing an appointment with a physician in such practice
14 area or specialty exceeds the waiting time goals es-
15 tablished by the Department; or

16 “(2) the Department facility where the physi-
17 cian will be employed has demonstrated staffing
18 shortages, as determined by the Secretary.

19 “(b) VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS.—There shall be in
20 each medical facility of the Department a volunteer coordi-
21 nator. The volunteer coordinator for a medical facility
22 shall—

23 “(1) seek to establish relationships with medical
24 associations serving the area where the facility is lo-
25 cated;

1 “(2) recruit physicians for employment on a
2 without compensation basis in the facility; and

3 “(3) serve as the initial point of contact for
4 physicians seeking employment on a without com-
5 pensation basis in the facility.

6 “(c) QUALIFICATIONS.—A physician employed on a
7 without compensation basis shall agree, as a condition of
8 being granted a credential or privilege to practice medicine
9 in a facility of the Department, to commit to serving a
10 minimum of 40 hours in the facility during the 12-month
11 period beginning on the date on which such credential or
12 privilege is granted.

13 “(d) CREDENTIALING PROCESS.—(1) The Secretary
14 shall ensure that each physician who seeks employment
15 at the Department on a without compensation basis re-
16 ceives a credential or privilege to practice medicine in the
17 Department, or a decision that such a credential or privi-
18 lege will not be granted, by not later than 60 days after
19 the date on which the physician requests such credential
20 or privilege.

21 “(2) The director of a medical facility of the Depart-
22 ment shall approve, and accept the services of, any physi-
23 cian who meets the qualifications under subsection (c) and
24 receives a credential or privilege to practice medicine in
25 the facility under paragraph (1).

1 “(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than March 31 of
2 each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees
3 on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committees on Appropria-
4 tions of the Senate and House of Representatives a report
5 on physicians employed on a without compensation basis
6 at the Department. Each such report shall include, for the
7 year preceding the year during which the report is sub-
8 mitted, each of the following:

9 “(1) The number of physicians employed on a
10 without compensation basis by the Department in
11 each of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks.

12 “(2) Information about staffing levels and ap-
13 pointment waiting times for facilities located in each
14 such Veterans Integrated Service Networks.”.

15 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
16 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
17 after the item relating to section 7405 the following new
18 item:

“7405A. Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans program.”.

