

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1682

To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain clarifications and improvements in the academic and vocational counseling programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 12, 2013

Mr. CASEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain clarifications and improvements in the academic and vocational counseling programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, 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 “Veterans Education
5 Counseling Act of 2013”.

1 **SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRO-**
2 **VISION OF ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL**
3 **COUNSELING TO ELIGIBLE VETERANS BY**
4 **THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) ACADEMIC COUNSELING AND EDUCATIONAL IN-
6 FORMATION SERVICE.—Section 3697A of title 38, United
7 States Code, is amended—

8 (1) in subsection (a), by striking “counseling
9 services, including” and inserting “a program of
10 counseling services, to be known as the ‘Academic
11 Counseling and Educational Information Service’.
12 Such counseling services shall include”;

13 (2) in subsection (e)—

14 (A) by inserting “(1)” before “The Sec-
15 retary shall”; and

16 (B) by adding at the end the following:

17 “(2) In making such information available under this
18 subsection, the Secretary shall make available information
19 about the definitions, eligibility requirements, and services
20 provided under this section and information about how the
21 counseling services provided under this section differ from
22 the services provided under section 3104(a)(2) of this title.

23 “(3) At a minimum, the Secretary shall make such
24 information available to an individual described in sub-
25 section (b) before the individual applies for educational as-
26 sistance described in subsection (b)(1).”; and

1 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
2 sections:

3 “(f) The Secretary shall maintain an Internet website
4 on which—

5 “(1) a person is able to request counseling serv-
6 ices under this section in such a manner that clearly
7 distinguishes such services from counseling services
8 available under section 3104(a)(2) of this title; and

9 “(2) an individual receiving counseling services
10 under this section is able to receive such services
11 using a web-based counseling tool and to confiden-
12 tially access aptitude tests.

13 “(g) The primary goal of the counseling services pro-
14 vided under this section is to provide to individuals assist-
15 ance in—

16 “(1) pursuing postsecondary education and
17 training opportunities;

18 “(2) obtaining information regarding available
19 postsecondary educational and training opportuni-
20 ties;

21 “(3) obtaining career-related information and
22 data on available postsecondary educational and
23 training opportunities;

24 “(4) selecting a program of education or train-
25 ing; and

1 “(5) addressing other needs relating to edu-
2 cation.

3 “(h) Services provided under this section are different
4 from the services provided under section 3104(a)(2) of
5 this title and do not involve rehabilitation services.”.

6 (b) VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELING.—

7 (1) ELECTRONIC APPLICATION.—Section 3102
8 of such title is amended by adding at the end the
9 following new subsection:

10 “(c) ELECTRONIC APPLICATION FOR BENEFITS.—
11 The Secretary shall maintain an Internet website on which
12 a person is able to submit an application for benefits
13 under this chapter.”.

14 (2) CLARIFICATION REGARDING ELIGIBILITY.—

15 Veterans are only eligible for counseling services pro-
16 vided under section 3104(a)(2) of title 38, United
17 States Code, if they are entitled to a rehabilitation
18 program under chapter 31 of such title. Not all vet-
19 erans who are transitioning from service on active
20 duty in the Armed Forces are eligible for such serv-
21 ices.

22 (3) GOAL OF PROGRAM.—The primary goal of
23 the counseling services provided under section
24 3104(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is to help

- 1 veterans eligible for such services to prepare for, ob-
- 2 tain, and retain employment.

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