

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 800

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the South Texas Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Center at Harlingen, located in Harlingen, Texas, includes a full-service inpatient health care facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to redesignate such center, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 24, 2013

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

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the South Texas Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Center at Harlingen, located in Harlingen, Texas, includes a full-service inpatient health care facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to redesignate such center, 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 “Treto Garza Far South
5 Texas Veterans Inpatient Care Act of 2013”.

1 **SEC. 2. INPATIENT HEALTH CARE FACILITY AT DEPART-**
2 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FA-**
3 **CILITY IN HARLINGEN, TEXAS.**

4 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
5 ings:

6 (1) The current and future health care needs of
7 veterans residing in Far South Texas are not being
8 fully met by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

9 (2) According to recent census data, more than
10 108,000 veterans reside in Far South Texas.

11 (3) Travel times for veterans from the Valley
12 Coastal Bend area from their homes to the nearest
13 Department of Veterans Affairs hospital for acute
14 inpatient health care can exceed six hours.

15 (4) Even with the significant travel times, vet-
16 erans from Far South Texas demonstrate a high de-
17 mand for health care services from the Department
18 of Veterans Affairs.

19 (5) Ongoing overseas deployments of members
20 of the Armed Forces from Texas, including members
21 of the Armed Forces on active duty, members of the
22 Texas National Guard, and members of the other re-
23 serve components of the Armed Forces, will continue
24 to increase demand for medical services provided by
25 the Department of Veterans Affairs.

1 (6) The Department of Veterans Affairs em-
2 ploys an annual Strategic Capital Investment Plan-
3 ning process to “enable the VA to continually adapt
4 to changes in demographics, medical and informa-
5 tion technology, and health care delivery”, which re-
6 sults in the development of a multi-year investment
7 plan that determines where gaps in services exist or
8 are projected and develops an appropriate solution
9 to meet those gaps.

10 (7) According to the Department of Veterans
11 Affairs, final approval of the Strategic Capital In-
12 vestment Planning priority list serves as the “build-
13 ing block” of the annual budget request for the De-
14 partment.

15 (8) Arturo “Treto” Garza, a veteran who
16 served in the Marine Corps, rose to the rank of Ser-
17 geant, and served two tours in the Vietnam War,
18 passed away on October 3, 2012.

19 (9) Treto Garza, who was also a former co-
20 chairman of the Veterans Alliance of the Rio Grande
21 Valley, tirelessly fought to improve health care serv-
22 ices for veterans in the Rio Grande Valley, with his
23 efforts successfully leading to the creation of the
24 South Texas VA Health Care Center at Harlingen,
25 located in Harlingen, Texas.

1 (b) REDESIGNATION OF SOUTH TEXAS DEPARTMENT
2 OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE CENTER.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The South Texas Depart-
4 ment of Veterans Affairs Health Care Center at
5 Harlingen, located in Harlingen, Texas, is redesign-
6 nated as the “Treto Garza South Texas Department
7 of Veterans Affairs Health Care Center”.

8 (2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law,
9 map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of
10 the United States to the medical facility of the De-
11 partment of Veterans Affairs referred to in para-
12 graph (1) shall be deemed to be a reference to the
13 “Treto Garza South Texas Department of Veterans
14 Affairs Health Care Center”.

15 (c) REQUIREMENT OF FULL-SERVICE INPATIENT
16 FACILITY.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
18 Affairs shall ensure that the Treto Garza South
19 Texas Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care
20 Center includes a full-service inpatient health care
21 facility of the Department and shall modify the ex-
22 isting facility as necessary to meet that requirement.

23 (2) PLAN TO EXPAND FACILITY CAPABILI-
24 TIES.—The Secretary shall include in the annual
25 Strategic Capital Investment Plan of the Depart-

1 ment a project to expand the capabilities of the
2 Treto Garza South Texas Department of Veterans
3 Affairs Health Care Center by adding the following:

4 (A) Inpatient capability for 50 beds with
5 appropriate administrative, clinical, diagnostic,
6 and ancillary services needed for support.

7 (B) An urgent care center.

8 (C) The capability to provide a full range
9 of services to meet the needs of women vet-
10 erans.

11 (d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days
12 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
13 shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
14 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
15 House of Representatives a report detailing a plan to im-
16 plement the requirements in subsection (c), including an
17 estimate of the cost of required actions and the time nec-
18 essary for the completion of those actions.

19 (e) FAR SOUTH TEXAS DEFINED.—In this section,
20 the term “Far South Texas” means the following counties
21 in Texas: Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Calhoun, Cameron,
22 DeWitt, Dimmit, Duval, Goliad, Hidalgo, Jackson, Jim
23 Hogg, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Nueces, Refugio, San
24 Patricio, Starr, Victoria, Webb, Willacy, Zapata.

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