

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1885

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of assistance and benefits to veterans who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or occupying temporary housing, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 29, 2015

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, and Ms. HIRONO) 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 improve the provision of assistance and benefits to veterans who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or occupying temporary housing, 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 “Veteran Housing Sta-
5 bility Act of 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF DEFINITION OF HOMELESS VET-**
 2 **ERAN FOR PURPOSES OF BENEFITS UNDER**
 3 **THE LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SEC-**
 4 **RETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 Section 2002(1) of title 38, United States Code, is
 6 amended by striking “in section 103(a) of the McKinney-
 7 Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a))”
 8 and inserting “in subsection (a) or (b) of section 103 of
 9 the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.
 10 11302)”.

11 **SEC. 3. PROGRAM ON PROVISION OF INTENSIVE CASE MAN-**
 12 **AGEMENT INTERVENTIONS TO HOMELESS**
 13 **VETERANS WHO RECEIVE THE MOST HEALTH**
 14 **CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
 15 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

16 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VII of chapter
 18 20 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by
 19 adding at the end the following new section:

20 **“§ 2067. Intensive case management interventions**

21 “(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall
 22 carry out a program under which the Secretary shall pro-
 23 vide intensive case management interventions to covered
 24 veterans.

25 “(b) COVERED VETERANS.—For purposes of the pro-
 26 gram, a covered veteran is a veteran who is enrolled in—

1 “(1) the homeless registry of the Department;
2 and

3 “(2) the system of annual patient enrollment
4 established and operated by the Secretary under sec-
5 tion 1705(a) of this title.

6 “(c) LOCATION.—(1) The Secretary shall carry out
7 the program at not fewer than six locations selected by
8 the Secretary for purposes of the program as follows:

9 “(A) Not fewer than three locations in cities
10 that have the largest populations of homeless vet-
11 erans in the United States.

12 “(B) Not fewer than three locations in subur-
13 ban or rural settings.

14 “(2) In selecting locations under paragraph (1), the
15 Secretary shall only select locations in areas in which the
16 Secretary determines that there is a high degree of inter-
17 action and coordination between the Department and com-
18 munity organizations that provide housing and social serv-
19 ices for veterans, such as outreach, employment, and fi-
20 nancial assistance for homeless veterans, veterans at risk
21 of becoming homeless, and low-income veterans.

22 “(d) PROVISION OF INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT
23 INTERVENTIONS.—(1) In carrying out the program at
24 each location selected under subsection (c), the Secretary
25 shall provide intensive case management interventions to

1 not fewer than 20 covered veterans at each such location
 2 who the Secretary determines are the covered veterans at
 3 such location who receive the most health care and related
 4 services furnished by the Department.

5 “(2) The intensive case management interventions
 6 provided to covered veterans under paragraph (1) shall in-
 7 clude assistance with gaining and maintaining access to
 8 such housing and services, including benefits and services
 9 to which covered veterans may be entitled or eligible under
 10 the laws administered by the Secretary, as may be nec-
 11 essary to improve the stability of their housing and the
 12 appropriateness of the health care that they receive.”.

13 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
 14 tions at the beginning of chapter 20 of such title is
 15 amended by inserting after the item relating to sec-
 16 tion 2066 the following new item:

“2067. Intensive case management interventions.”.

17 (b) COMMENCEMENT.—Not later than September 1,
 18 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall commence
 19 carrying out the program required by section 2067(a) of
 20 such title, as added by subsection (a)(1).

21 (c) REPORT.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 1,
 23 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee
 24 on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Com-
 25 mittee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Rep-

1 representatives a report on the program carried out
2 under section 2067 of such title, as added by sub-
3 section (a)(1).

4 (2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under
5 paragraph (1) shall include assessments of the fol-
6 lowing:

7 (A) The types and frequencies of intensive
8 case management interventions provided under
9 the program.

10 (B) The housing status of each veteran
11 who received an intensive case management
12 intervention under the program.

13 (C) The employment status of each veteran
14 who received an intensive case management
15 intervention under the program, including a
16 comparison of the employment status of such
17 veteran before and after receiving such inter-
18 vention.

19 (D) The use by veterans who received in-
20 tensive case management interventions under
21 the program of health care and related services
22 furnished by the Department of Veterans Af-
23 fairs and the costs incurred by the Department
24 in furnishing such care and services, including
25 a comparison of the use by such veterans of

1 such care and services and the costs incurred
2 from furnishing such care and services before
3 and after receiving such interventions.

4 (E) The number of veterans who received
5 intensive case management interventions under
6 the program, disaggregated by whether the in-
7 tensive case management intervention was pro-
8 vided in a location described in subparagraph
9 (A) or (B) of section 2067(c)(1) of such title,
10 as added by subsection (a)(1).

11 (F) The costs incurred by the Department
12 in carrying out the program, disaggregated by
13 provision of intensive case management inter-
14 ventions in locations described in subpara-
15 graphs (A) and (B) of such section.

16 (G) An estimate of the costs the Depart-
17 ment would have incurred for the provision of
18 health care and associated services to covered
19 veterans (as described in subsection (b) of sec-
20 tion 2067 of such title, as added by subsection
21 (a)(1)) but for the provision of intensive case
22 management interventions under the program,
23 disaggregated by provision of intensive case
24 management interventions in locations de-

1 scribed in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of sub-
2 section (c) of such section.

3 **SEC. 4. PROGRAM TO IMPROVE RETENTION OF HOUSING**
4 **BY FORMERLY HOMELESS VETERANS AND**
5 **VETERANS AT RISK OF BECOMING HOME-**
6 **LESS.**

7 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 20
9 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

10 (A) by redesignating section 2013 as sec-
11 tion 2014; and

12 (B) by inserting after section 2012 the fol-
13 lowing new section 2013:

14 **“§ 2013. Program to improve retention of housing by**
15 **formerly homeless veterans and veterans**
16 **at risk of becoming homeless**

17 “(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall
18 carry out a program under which the Secretary shall pro-
19 vide case management services to improve the retention
20 of housing by veterans who were previously homeless and
21 are transitioning to permanent housing and veterans who
22 are at risk of becoming homeless.

23 “(b) GRANTS.—(1) The Secretary shall carry out the
24 program through the award of grants.

1 “(2)(A) In awarding grants under paragraph (1), the
2 Secretary shall give priority to organizations that dem-
3 onstrate a capability to provide case management services
4 as described in subsection (a), particularly organizations
5 that are successfully providing or have successfully pro-
6 vided transitional housing services using amounts provided
7 by the Secretary under sections 2012 and 2061 of this
8 title.

9 “(B) In giving priority under subparagraph (A), the
10 Secretary shall give extra priority to an organization de-
11 scribed in such subparagraph that—

12 “(i) voluntarily stops receiving amounts pro-
13 vided by the Secretary under sections 2012 and
14 2061 of this title; and

15 “(ii) converts a facility that the organization
16 used to provide transitional housing services into a
17 facility that the organization uses to provide perma-
18 nent housing that meets housing quality standards
19 established under section 8(o)(8)(B) of the United
20 States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C.
21 1437f(o)(8)(B)).

22 “(C) In any case in which a facility, with respect to
23 which a person received a grant for construction, rehabili-
24 tation, or acquisition under section 2011 of this title, is
25 converted as described in subparagraph (B)(ii), such con-

1 version shall be considered to have been carried out pursu-
 2 ant to the needs of the Department and such person shall
 3 not be considered in non-compliance with the terms of
 4 such grant by reason of such conversion.”.

5 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
 6 tions at the beginning of chapter 20 of such title is
 7 amended by striking the item relating to section
 8 2013 and inserting the following new items:

“2013. Program to improve retention of housing by formerly homeless veterans
 and veterans at risk of becoming homeless.

“2014. Authorization of appropriations.”.

9 (b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than one year after the
 10 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
 11 erans Affairs shall prescribe regulations to carry out sec-
 12 tion 2013 of such title, as added by subsection (a)(1)(B).

13 (c) REPORT.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than June 1,
 15 2019, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee
 16 on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Com-
 17 mittee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Rep-
 18 resentatives a report on the program required by
 19 section 2013 of such title, as added by subsection
 20 (a)(1)(B).

21 (2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under
 22 paragraph (1) shall include assessments of the fol-
 23 lowing:

1 (A) The percentage of veterans who re-
2 ceived case management services under the pro-
3 gram who were able to retain permanent hous-
4 ing by the end of the pilot program,
5 disaggregated by each recipient of a grant
6 under such section.

7 (B) The percentage of veterans who re-
8 ceived case management services under the pro-
9 gram who were not in permanent housing at
10 the end of the program, disaggregated by hous-
11 ing status and reason for failing to retain per-
12 manent housing under the program.

13 (C) The use by veterans who received case
14 management services under the program of
15 housing assistance furnished by the Department
16 of Veterans Affairs, including a comparison of
17 the use of such assistance by such veterans be-
18 fore and after receiving such services.

19 (D) An assessment of the employment sta-
20 tus of veterans who received case management
21 services under the program, including a com-
22 parison of the employment status of such vet-
23 erans before and after receiving such services.

1 **SEC. 5. EXPANSION OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF**
2 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2041 of title 38, United
4 States Code, is amended—

5 (1) in the section heading, by adding at the end
6 the following: “, **veterans in temporary hous-**
7 **ing, and very low-income veteran fami-**
8 **lies**”; and

9 (2) in subsection (a)—

10 (A) in paragraph (1), in the matter before
11 subparagraph (A), by striking “To assist home-
12 less veterans and their families in acquiring
13 shelter” and inserting “To assist homeless vet-
14 erans and their families, veterans and their
15 families who are at risk of becoming homeless,
16 and very low-income veteran families (as de-
17 fined in section 2044(f) of this title) in acquir-
18 ing shelter, in acquiring and transitioning to
19 permanent housing, and in maintaining occu-
20 pancy in permanent housing”;

21 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking “home-
22 less veterans” and inserting “veterans and fam-
23 ilies described in paragraph (1)”; and

24 (C) in paragraph (3)(B)—

25 (i) in clause (i), by striking “solely as
26 a shelter primarily for homeless veterans

1 and their families” and inserting “to pro-
 2 vide permanent or transitional housing for
 3 veterans and families described in para-
 4 graph (1)”;

5 (ii) in clause (iii), by striking “and”
 6 at the end;

7 (iii) by redesignating clause (iv) as
 8 clause (v);

9 (iv) by inserting after clause (iii) the
 10 following new clause (iv):

11 “(iv) ensure that veterans who receive
 12 housing at the property also receive referrals
 13 for the benefits and services to which they may
 14 be entitled or eligible under this title, and”;

15 (v) in clause (v), as redesignated by
 16 clause (iii) of this subparagraph, by strik-
 17 ing “homeless veterans” and inserting
 18 “veterans and families described in para-
 19 graph (1)”.

20 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 21 at the beginning of chapter 20 of such title is amended
 22 by striking the item relating to section 2041 and inserting
 23 the following new item:

“2041. Housing assistance for homeless veterans, veterans in temporary hous-
 ing, and very low-income veteran families.”.

1 **SEC. 6. OUTREACH RELATING TO INCREASING THE**
 2 **AMOUNT OF HOUSING AVAILABLE TO VET-**
 3 **ERANS.**

4 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, in collabora-
 5 tion with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Develop-
 6 ment, public housing authorities, tribally designated hous-
 7 ing entities, realtors, landlords, property management
 8 companies, developers, and such other persons as the Sec-
 9 retary considers appropriate, conduct outreach to realtors,
 10 landlords, property management companies, and devel-
 11 opers to educate them about the housing needs of veterans
 12 and the benefits of having veterans as tenants.

13 **SEC. 7. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CENTER ON HOME-**
 14 **LESSNESS AMONG VETERANS.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VII of chapter 20 of
 16 title 38, United States Code, as amended by section
 17 3(a)(1), is further amended by adding at the end the fol-
 18 lowing new section:

19 **“§ 2068. National Center on Homelessness Among Vet-**
 20 **erans**

21 “(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary shall establish
 22 and operate a center to carry out the functions described
 23 in subsection (b).

24 “(2) The center establish under paragraph (1) shall
 25 be known as the ‘National Center on Homelessness Among
 26 Veterans’.

1 “(3) To the degree practicable, the Secretary shall
2 operate the center established under paragraph (1) inde-
3 pendently of the other programs of the Department that
4 address homelessness among veterans.

5 “(b) FUNCTIONS.—The functions described in this
6 subsection are as follows:

7 “(1) To carry out and promote research into
8 the causes and contributing factors to veteran home-
9 lessness.

10 “(2) To assess the effectiveness of programs of
11 the Department to meet the needs of homeless vet-
12 erans.

13 “(3) To identify and disseminate best practices
14 with regard to housing stabilization, income support,
15 employment assistance, community partnerships,
16 and such other matters as the Secretary considers
17 appropriate with respect to addressing veteran
18 homelessness.

19 “(4) To integrate evidence-based and best prac-
20 tices, policies, and programs into programs of the
21 Department for homeless veterans and veterans at
22 risk of homelessness and to ensure that the staff of
23 the Department and community partners can imple-
24 ment such practices, policies, and programs.

1 “(5) To serve as a resource center for, and pro-
 2 mote and seek to coordinate the exchange of infor-
 3 mation regarding, all research and training activities
 4 carried out by the Department and by other Federal
 5 and non-Federal entities with respect to veteran
 6 homelessness.”.

7 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 8 at the beginning of chapter 20 of such title, as amended
 9 by section 3(a)(2), is further amended by inserting after
 10 the item relating to section 2067 the following new item:

 “2068. National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans.”.

11 **SEC. 8. ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS TO GRANT AND**
 12 **PER DIEM PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF**
 13 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

14 Section 2012 of title 38, United States Code, is
 15 amended—

16 (1) in subsection (a)(1), in the matter before
 17 subparagraph (A), by inserting “and except as oth-
 18 erwise provided in this section” after “such pur-
 19 pose”; and

20 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
 21 section:

22 “(e) REVIEW AND CONDITIONAL RENEWAL.—(1)
 23 Each year, the Secretary shall review each grant recipient
 24 and eligible entity that received a per diem payment under
 25 this section for a service furnished to a veteran during

1 the one-year period preceding the review to evaluate the
2 performance of the grant recipient or eligible entity during
3 that period with respect to—

4 “(A) the success of the grant recipient or eligi-
5 ble entity in assisting veterans obtain, transition
6 into, and retain permanent housing; and

7 “(B) increasing the income of veterans, whether
8 by helping veterans obtain employment or by helping
9 veterans obtain income-related benefits to which
10 such veterans may be eligible or entitled.

11 “(2) For any grant recipient or eligible entity whose
12 performance was evaluated for a year under paragraph
13 (1), the Secretary may only provide per diem under this
14 section to that grant recipient or eligible entity in the fol-
15 lowing year if the Secretary determines that such perform-
16 ance merits continued receipt of per diem under this sec-
17 tion.

18 “(3) The Secretary shall establish uniform perform-
19 ance targets throughout the United States for all grant
20 recipients and eligible entities that receive per diem pay-
21 ments under this section for purposes of evaluating the
22 performance of each such grant recipient and eligible enti-
23 ty under this subsection.”.

○