

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2703

To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into agreements with public and private entities to provide pro bono legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 25, 2017

Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. KEATING, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. MCGOVERN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into agreements with public and private entities to provide pro bono legal services 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 “Legal Services for
5 Homeless Veterans Act of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. AGREEMENTS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTI-**
2 **TIES TO PROVIDE LEGAL SERVICES TO**
3 **HOMELESS VETERANS AND VETERANS AT**
4 **RISK OF HOMELESSNESS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 20 of title 38, United
6 States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2022
7 the following new section:

8 **“§ 2022A. Agreements with public and private entities**
9 **to provide pro bono legal services to**
10 **homeless veterans and veterans at risk of**
11 **homelessness**

12 “(a) AGREEMENTS AUTHORIZED.—Subject to the
13 availability of funds for that purpose, the Secretary may
14 enter into an agreement with a public or private entity,
15 through the award of a grant or the use of a contract,
16 to fund a portion of legal services described in subsection
17 (b).

18 “(b) PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES.—Legal services
19 described in this subsection are provided pro bono to a
20 homeless veteran or veteran at risk of homelessness, in-
21 cluding the following:

22 “(1) Legal services related to housing, including
23 eviction defense and representation in landlord-ten-
24 ant cases.

1 “(2) Legal services related to family law, in-
2 cluding assistance in court proceedings for child sup-
3 port, divorce, and estate planning.

4 “(3) Legal services related to income support,
5 including assistance in obtaining public benefits.

6 “(4) Legal services related to criminal defense,
7 including defense in matters symptomatic of home-
8 lessness, such as outstanding warrants, fines, and
9 driver’s license revocation, to reduce recidivism, and
10 facilitate the overcoming of reentry obstacles in em-
11 ployment or housing.

12 “(c) CONSULTATION.—In developing and carrying
13 out agreements under this section, the Secretary shall, to
14 the extent practicable, consult with appropriate public and
15 private entities—

16 “(1) for assistance in identifying and contacting
17 organizations that offer legal services described in
18 subsection (b); and

19 “(2) to coordinate appropriate outreach rela-
20 tionships with such organizations.

21 “(d) LOCATIONS.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure
22 that, to the extent practicable, agreements under this sec-
23 tion are made with entities equitably distributed across the
24 geographic regions of the United States, including rural

1 communities, tribal lands of the United States, Native
2 Americans, and tribal organizations.

3 “(2) In this subsection, the terms ‘Native American’
4 and ‘tribal organization’ have the meanings given such
5 terms in section 3765 of this title.

6 “(e) REPORTS.—The Secretary may require an entity
7 that enters into an agreement under this section to submit
8 to the Secretary periodic reports on legal services provided
9 pursuant to the agreement.”.

10 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
11 at the beginning of chapter 20 of such title is amended
12 by adding after the item relating to section 2022 the fol-
13 lowing new item:

“2022A. Agreements with public and private entities to provide pro bono legal
services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homeless-
ness.”.

