

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5556

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct an analysis of the need for women-specific programs that treat and rehabilitate women veterans with drug and alcohol dependency and to carry out a pilot program regarding such programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 8, 2020

Ms. BROWNLEY of California introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct an analysis of the need for women-specific programs that treat and rehabilitate women veterans with drug and alcohol dependency and to carry out a pilot program regarding such programs.

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 “Women Veterans Transi-
5 tional Residence Utilizing Support and Treatment Act” or
6 the “Women Veterans TRUST Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Substance use problems are a significant
4 problem among veterans and can negatively impact
5 a veteran's health and quality of life.

6 (2) Veterans can turn to alcohol or drugs in an
7 attempt to relieve stress or the symptoms of mental
8 health disorders.

9 (3) Rates of substance use disorder among
10 women veterans range from three to 16 percent of
11 the population.

12 (4) Women veterans face a unique set of chal-
13 lenges associated with their military service that can
14 lead to substance abuse.

15 (5) Women veterans aged 35 and older were
16 found to have higher rates of substance-use dis-
17 orders than their non-veteran counterparts.

18 (6) Studies indicate women veterans are twice
19 as likely as men veterans to develop posttraumatic
20 stress disorder, twice as likely to have serious psy-
21 chological distress, and approximately one out of
22 four women veterans reports military sexual trauma.

23 (7) Studies indicate that women veterans with
24 a substance-use disorder diagnosis have higher rates
25 of suicide than their non-veteran peers, and women

1 veterans are more than twice as likely to die by sui-
2 cide than non-veteran women.

3 (8) Health services that are women-specific can
4 be important to effective care, and women veterans
5 consider the availability of women-specific care as
6 extremely important.

7 (9) While the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pro-
8 vides women veterans with substance use treatment
9 through a number of programs, the Women Vet-
10 erans' Therapeutic Transitional Residence Program
11 is a model for providing treatment and rehabilitative
12 services to women veterans with drug and alcohol
13 dependency, and it is critical that the Secretary
14 identifies the need for, and feasibility of, similar pro-
15 grams throughout the health care system of the De-
16 partment.

17 **SEC. 3. WOMEN-SPECIFIC DRUG AND ALCOHOL DEPEND-**
18 **ENCY TREATMENT AND REHABILITATIVE**
19 **PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN VETERANS.**

20 (a) ANALYSIS.—

21 (1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 180 days
22 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
23 retary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a nation-
24 wide analysis of the need for women-specific pro-
25 grams of the Department of Veterans Affairs that

1 treat and rehabilitate women veterans with drug and
2 alcohol dependency. Such analysis shall include the
3 following:

4 (A) With respect to each of the three years
5 preceding the date of the analysis, the annual
6 number of women veterans who have been
7 treated and rehabilitated for drug and alcohol
8 dependency at each medical center of the De-
9 partment of Veterans Affairs.

10 (B) Information on all non-Department
11 women-specific programs to which the Secretary
12 refers women veterans for treatment and reha-
13 bilitation of drug and alcohol dependency, in-
14 cluding, for each such program, the name of the
15 entity carrying out the program, the location of
16 the program, and the number of women vet-
17 erans referred by the Secretary served annually
18 by the program.

19 (C) An analysis of the effectiveness of pro-
20 grams of the Department and non-Department
21 programs to treat and rehabilitate women vet-
22 erans with drug and alcohol dependency,
23 disaggregated by single-sex versus coed pro-
24 grams.

1 (D) An analysis of all information the Sec-
2 retary maintains on the satisfaction of women
3 veterans with programs of the Department and
4 non-Department programs to treat and rehabili-
5 tate women veterans with drug and alcohol de-
6 pendency, disaggregated by single-sex versus
7 coed programs.

8 (E) An assessment of the demand and
9 need for women-specific programs to treat and
10 rehabilitate women veterans with drug and alco-
11 hol dependency, disaggregated by Veterans In-
12 tegrated Service Network and medical center of
13 the Department.

14 (F) Proposed locations for implementing
15 the pilot program under subsection (b).

16 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after
17 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
18 of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees
19 on Veterans' Affairs and Appropriations of the
20 House of Representatives and the Senate a report
21 containing the analysis under paragraph (1).

22 (b) PILOT PROGRAM.—

23 (1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than one year
24 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
25 retary shall carry out a women-specific pilot pro-

1 gram to treat and rehabilitate women veterans with
2 drug and alcohol dependency. The Secretary shall
3 develop such pilot program based on the findings of
4 the analysis conducted under subsection (a).

5 (2) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall select not
6 fewer than three Veterans Integrated Service Net-
7 works in which to carry out the pilot program.

8 (3) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out
9 a pilot program under this section shall terminate on
10 the date that is five years after the date of the en-
11 actment of this Act.

12 (4) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
13 the date on which the pilot program under para-
14 graph (1) is completed, the Secretary shall submit to
15 Committees on Veterans' Affairs and Appropriations
16 of the House of Representatives and the Senate a
17 report on the pilot program, including—

18 (A) the findings and conclusions of the
19 Secretary regarding the pilot program; and

20 (B) such recommendations of the Sec-
21 retary regarding the continuation or expansion
22 of the pilot program as the Secretary considers
23 appropriate.

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