

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7342

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

Received

AN ACT

To establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal
Access, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Accessibility
3 Advisory Committee Act of 2024”.

4 **SEC. 2. VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL AC-**
5 **CESS.**

6 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
9 retary of Veterans Affairs shall establish within the
10 Department of Veterans Affairs an advisory com-
11 mittee on matters relating to accessibility of the De-
12 partment for individuals with disabilities.

13 (2) DESIGNATION.—The advisory committee es-
14 tablished by paragraph (1) shall be known as the
15 “Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access” (in
16 this section the “Advisory Committee”).

17 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

18 (1) VOTING MEMBERS.—The Advisory Com-
19 mittee shall be composed of 15 voting members, ap-
20 pointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. In ap-
21 pointing such members, the Secretary shall ensure
22 the following:

23 (A) Four are veterans with disabilities, in-
24 cluding mobility impairment, hearing, visual,
25 and mental or cognitive disabilities.

1 (B) Four are experts on issues described in
2 subsection (f)(1)(A) or the provisions of law set
3 forth under subsection (f)(1)(B).

4 (C) Two are employees of the Department,
5 one from the Section 508 Office and one from
6 the Architectural Accessibility Program, who
7 oversee the compliance of the Department with
8 Federal accessibility laws.

9 (D) Five are representatives nominated by
10 national veterans service organizations that ad-
11 vocate for veterans with physical, sensory, men-
12 tal, or cognitive disabilities.

13 (2) EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.—The Advisory
14 Committee shall also include four ex officio members
15 (or their designees):

16 (A) The Under Secretary for Health.

17 (B) The Under Secretary for Benefits.

18 (C) The Under Secretary for Memorial Af-
19 fairs.

20 (D) The chairperson of the Architectural
21 and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
22 (known as the “Access Board”).

23 (c) TERMS; VACANCIES.—

24 (1) TERMS.—A member of the Advisory Com-
25 mittee shall be appointed for a term of two years.

1 The Secretary may reappoint members to the Advi-
2 sory Committee for such additional two-year terms
3 as the Secretary determines appropriate.

4 (2) VACANCIES.—The Secretary shall fill a va-
5 cancy in the Advisory Committee in the same man-
6 ner as the original appointment not later than 180
7 days after such vacancy occurs.

8 (d) MEETINGS.—

9 (1) FREQUENCY.—The Advisory Committee
10 shall meet not less frequently than twice each year.

11 (2) SUBCOMMITTEES.—The Advisory Com-
12 mittee may form subcommittees, which shall meet as
13 often as required.

14 (3) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of
15 the Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum.

16 (e) CHAIRPERSON.—Members of the Advisory Com-
17 mittee shall select a Chairperson from among the members
18 of the Advisory Committee. If the position of Chairperson
19 becomes vacant, the members of the Advisory Committee
20 shall select a new Chairperson not later than 30 days after
21 the date on which the position became vacant.

22 (f) DUTIES.—

23 (1) REQUIREMENT TO CONSULT AND SEEK AD-
24 VICE.—On a regular basis, the Secretary shall con-

1 sult with and seek the advice of the Advisory Com-
2 mittee—

3 (A) on improving the accessibility of the
4 Department for individuals with disabilities, in-
5 cluding improving—

6 (i) the accessibility of information of
7 the Department, including electronic infor-
8 mation;

9 (ii) the accessibility of the services
10 and benefits furnished by the Department;

11 (iii) the accessibility of the facilities of
12 the Department;

13 (iv) the accessibility of facilities of
14 health care providers furnishing care or
15 services under the Veterans Community
16 Care Program under section 1703 of title
17 38, United States Code; and

18 (v) the acquisition process of the De-
19 partment to ensure that products and serv-
20 ices, including information technology and
21 information and communication technology
22 (as defined in the standards issued by the
23 Architectural and Transportation Barriers
24 Compliance Board pursuant to section 508
25 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29

1 U.S.C. 794d)), are accessible when pur-
2 chased; and

3 (B) for ensuring the compliance of the De-
4 partment with provisions of law relating to dis-
5 ability and accessibility, including—

6 (i) the Americans with Disabilities Act
7 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12184 et seq.);

8 (ii) sections 504 and 508 of the Reha-
9 bilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791,
10 794, and 794d);

11 (iii) the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5
12 U.S.C. 301 note);

13 (iv) the 21st Century Integrated Dig-
14 ital Experience Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 note);

15 (v) the Architectural Barriers Act of
16 1968 (Public Law 90–480); and

17 (vi) such other provisions of Federal
18 law as may be that ensure equal access to
19 Federal facilities, benefits, or services for
20 individuals with disabilities.

21 (2) PROVISION OF ADVICE.—In providing ad-
22 vice to the Secretary, the Advisory Committee shall,
23 focusing on the areas of greatest need for the De-
24 partment—

1 (A) assess the disability access needs of
2 veterans, the public, and Department employees
3 for full access to the Department's information,
4 services, and benefits by reviewing relevant in-
5 formation, such as filed complaints by people
6 with disabilities or physical assessments of the
7 Department's facilities;

8 (B) provide assessments of accessibility at
9 the Department and the compliance of the De-
10 partment with applicable provisions of law re-
11 lating to disability and accessibility; and

12 (C) provide advice on improving accessi-
13 bility at the Department, including the accessi-
14 bility of all—

15 (i) communications, including internal
16 and public facing;

17 (ii) services and benefits; and

18 (iii) facilities.

19 (3) REPORTS.—

20 (A) REPORTS TO THE SECRETARY.—Not
21 later than two years after the date of the first
22 meeting of the Advisory Committee, and not
23 less frequently than once every two years there-
24 after, the Advisory Committee shall submit to

1 the Secretary a report that, focusing on areas
2 of greatest need for the Department—

3 (i) identifies and assesses access bar-
4 riers affecting veterans, the public, and
5 employees of the Department;

6 (ii) determines the extent to which the
7 programs and activities of the Department
8 address the barriers identified in clause (i),
9 including compliance of the Department
10 with provisions of law relating to accessi-
11 bility law and reporting;

12 (iii) provides recommendations and
13 access priorities to improve the accessi-
14 bility of the Department's services, bene-
15 fits, information, technology, and facilities;

16 (iv) provides a description of access
17 improvements and assesses the Depart-
18 ment's implementation of recommendations
19 from previous reports of the Advisory
20 Committee, including any unmet rec-
21 ommendations that remain necessary for
22 improving accessibility for the Department;
23 and

24 (v) provides any recommendations for
25 legislation, administrative action, or other

1 actions that the Advisory Committee deter-
2 mines appropriate.

3 (B) REPORTS TO CONGRESS AND FEDERAL
4 AGENCIES.—

5 (i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90
6 days after the receipt of a report required
7 under subparagraph (A), the Secretary
8 shall submit to the appropriate congres-
9 sional committees a copy of such report
10 and any comments and recommendations
11 of the Secretary concerning such report
12 that the Secretary determines appropriate.

13 (ii) AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC.—
14 The Secretary shall publish on a publicly
15 accessible website of the Department such
16 report and such comments and rec-
17 ommendations as may have been submitted
18 along with such report.

19 (iii) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL
20 COMMITTEES.—In this subparagraph, the
21 term “appropriate congressional commit-
22 tees” means—

23 (I) the Committees on Veterans’
24 Affairs of the Senate and House of
25 Representatives;

1 (II) the Special Committee on
2 Aging of the Senate; and

3 (III) the Committee on Edu-
4 cation and the Workforce of the
5 House of Representatives.

6 (g) ADVISORY COMMITTEE PERSONNEL AND RE-
7 SOURCE MATTERS.—

8 (1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—A member
9 of the Commission who is not an officer or employee
10 of the Federal Government shall not be compensated
11 for the performance of the duties of the Advisory
12 Committee.

13 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Ad-
14 visory Committee shall be allowed travel expenses,
15 including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates
16 authorized for employees of agencies under sub-
17 chapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States
18 Code, while away from their homes or regular places
19 of business in the performance of services for the
20 Advisory Committee.

21 (3) RESOURCES.—The Secretary shall ensure
22 that such personnel, funding, and other resources
23 are made available to the Advisory Committee as the
24 Secretary determines appropriate to carry out the
25 duties of the Advisory Committee.

1 (4) INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall furnish
2 to the Advisory Committee such information as the
3 Advisory Committee may request from the Sec-
4 retary, subject to applicable provisions of law.

5 (h) TERMINATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The
6 Advisory Committee shall terminate on the date that is
7 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

8 **SEC. 3. ABOLITION OF INACTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

9 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
10 ment of this Act and before establishing the Veterans Ad-
11 visory Committee on Equal Access under section 2, the
12 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

13 (1) abolish an advisory committee of the De-
14 partment of Veterans Affairs that—

15 (A) was not established by an Act of Con-
16 gress; and

17 (B) is inactive;

18 (2) consolidate two advisory committees de-
19 scribed in paragraph (1); or

20 (3) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-
21 fairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a
22 recommendation to abolish an advisory committee of
23 the Department that—

24 (A) was established by an Act of Congress;
25 and

1 (B) is inactive.

2 **SEC. 4. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.**

3 The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38,
4 United States Code, is amended by striking “November
5 15, 2031” each place it appears and inserting “November
6 29, 2031”.

Passed the House of Representatives September 17,
2024.

Attest: KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Clerk.