

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6358

To reauthorize and improve a grant program to assist institutions of higher education in establishing, maintaining, improving, and operating Student Veteran Centers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 2, 2025

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida (for herself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. BACON, Mr. BELL, Mr. BISHOP, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. CHU, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. FIELDS, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. NORTON, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEU, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. MCBRIDE, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NUNN of Iowa, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. WHITESIDES, and Ms. WILSON of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To reauthorize and improve a grant program to assist institutions of higher education in establishing, maintaining, improving, and operating Student Veteran Centers.

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 Education
5 Empowerment Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Almost 1,000,000 veterans attend institu-
4 tions of higher education each year.

5 (2) Veterans face unique challenges in
6 transitioning from the battlefield to the classroom
7 and eventually to the workforce, including age dif-
8 ferences, family obligations, significant time away
9 from academic life, and service-related disabilities.

10 (3) Studies have found that student veterans
11 can feel lonely and vulnerable on campus and that
12 connecting student veterans can effectively ease this
13 isolation by bringing together new student veterans
14 with those who have already successfully navigated
15 the first few semesters of college.

16 (4) Student Veteran Centers are recognized as
17 an institutional best practice by Student Veterans of
18 America.

19 (5) The Department of Education included as
20 one of its 8 Keys to Veterans' Success that colleges
21 and universities should "coordinate and centralize
22 campus efforts for all veterans, together with the
23 creation of a designated space for them".

24 (6) Budget constraints often make it difficult or
25 impossible for institutions of higher education to

1 dedicate space to veteran offices, lounges, or student
2 centers.

3 (7) The 110th Congress authorized the funding
4 of Student Veteran Centers through the Centers of
5 Excellence for Veteran Student Success under part
6 T of title VIII of the Higher Education Act of 1965
7 (20 U.S.C. 1161t). Congress has appropriated fund-
8 ing for this program in subsequent years.

9 **SEC. 3. GRANT PROGRAM TO ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN, AND**
10 **IMPROVE STUDENT VETERAN CENTERS.**

11 Part T of title VIII of the Higher Education Act of
12 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1161t) is amended to read as follows:

13 **“PART T—GRANTS FOR STUDENT VETERAN**
14 **CENTERS**

15 **“SEC. 873. GRANTS FOR STUDENT VETERAN CENTERS.**

16 “(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—Subject to the avail-
17 ability of appropriations under subsection (h), the Sec-
18 retary shall award grants to institutions of higher edu-
19 cation or consortia of institutions of higher education to
20 assist in the establishment, maintenance, improvement,
21 and operation of Student Veteran Centers.

22 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—

23 “(1) APPLICATION.—An institution or consor-
24 tium seeking a grant under subsection (a) shall sub-
25 mit to the Secretary an application at such time, in

1 such manner, and containing such information as
2 the Secretary may require.

3 “(2) CRITERIA.—The Secretary may award a
4 grant under subsection (a) to an institution or a
5 consortium if the institution or consortium meets
6 each of the following criteria:

7 “(A) The institution or consortium enrolls
8 in undergraduate or graduate courses—

9 “(i) a significant number of student
10 veterans, members of the Armed Forces
11 serving on active duty, or members of a re-
12 serve component of the Armed Forces; or

13 “(ii) a significant percentage of stu-
14 dent veterans, members of the Armed
15 Forces serving on active duty, or members
16 of a reserve component of the Armed
17 Forces,

18 as measured by comparing, for the most recent
19 academic year for which data are available, the
20 number or percentage of student veterans,
21 members of the Armed Forces serving on active
22 duty, and members of a reserve component of
23 the Armed Forces who are enrolled in under-
24 graduate or graduate courses at the institution
25 or consortium, with the average number or per-

centage of student veterans, members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty, and members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who were enrolled in undergraduate or graduate courses at comparable institutions or consortia of institutions.

“(B) The institution or consortium presents a sustainability plan to demonstrate that the Student Veteran Center will be maintained and will continue to operate after the grant period has ended.

“(3) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In awarding grants under subsection (a), the Secretary shall provide the following:

“(A) Priority consideration to institutions or consortia that meet one or more of the following criteria:

“(i) The institution or consortium is located in a region or community that has a significant population of veterans.

“(ii) The institution or consortium considers the need to serve student veterans at a wide range of institutions of higher education, including the need to provide equitable distribution of grants to

1 institutions of various sizes, geographic lo-
2 cations, and institutions in urban and
3 rural areas.

4 “(iii) The institution or consortium
5 carries out programs or activities that as-
6 sist veterans in the local community, and
7 the spouses or partners and children of
8 student veterans.

9 “(iv) The institution or consortium
10 partners in its veteran-specific program-
11 ming with nonprofit veteran service organi-
12 zations, local workforce development orga-
13 nizations, or other institutions of higher
14 education.

15 “(v) The institution or consortium
16 commits to hiring a staff at the Student
17 Veteran Center that includes veterans (in-
18 cluding student veteran volunteers and stu-
19 dent veterans participating in a Federal
20 work-study program under part C of title
21 IV, a work-study program administered by
22 the Secretary of Veteran Affairs, or a
23 State work-study program).

1 “(vi) The institution or consortium
2 commits to providing an orientation for
3 student veterans that—

4 “(I) is separate from the new
5 student orientation provided by the in-
6 stitution or consortium; and

7 “(II) provides student veterans
8 with information on the benefits and
9 resources available to such students at
10 or through the institution or consor-
11 tium.

12 “(vii) The institution or consortium
13 commits to using a portion of the grant re-
14 ceived under this section to develop or
15 maintain a student veteran retention pro-
16 gram carried out by the Student Veteran
17 Center.

18 “(viii) The institution or consortium
19 commits to providing mental health coun-
20 seling to its student veterans (and the
21 spouses or partners and children of such
22 students).

23 “(B) Equitable distribution of such grants
24 to institutions or consortia of various sizes, geo-
25 graphic locations, and in urban and rural areas.

1 “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—

2 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An institution or consor-
3 tium that is awarded a grant under subsection (a)
4 shall use such grant to establish, maintain, improve,
5 or operate a Student Veteran Center.

6 “(2) OTHER ALLOWABLE USES.—An institution
7 or consortium receiving a grant under subsection (a)
8 may use a portion of such grant to carry out sup-
9 portive instruction services for student veterans, in-
10 cluding—

11 “(A) assistance with special admissions
12 and transfer of credit from previous postsec-
13 ondary education or experience; and

14 “(B) any other support services the insti-
15 tution or consortium determines to be necessary
16 to ensure the success of student veterans in
17 achieving education and career goals.

18 “(d) AMOUNTS AWARDED.—

19 “(1) DURATION.—Each grant awarded under
20 subsection (a) shall be for a 4-year period.

21 “(2) TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT AND SCHED-
22 ULE.—Each grant awarded under subsection (a)
23 may not exceed a total of \$500,000. The Secretary
24 shall disburse to an institution or consortium the
25 amount awarded under the grant in such amounts

1 and at such times during the grant period as the
2 Secretary determines appropriate.

3 “(e) REPORT.—From the amounts appropriated to
4 carry out this section, and not later than 3 years after
5 the date on which the first grant is awarded under sub-
6 section (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a re-
7 port on the grant program established under subsection
8 (a), including—

9 “(1) the number of grants awarded;

10 “(2) the institutions of higher education and
11 consortia that have received grants;

12 “(3) with respect to each such institution of
13 higher education and consortium—

14 “(A) the amounts awarded;

15 “(B) how such institution or consortium
16 used such amounts;

17 “(C) a description of the demographics of
18 student veterans (and spouses or partners and
19 children of such students) to whom services
20 were offered as a result of the award, including
21 students who are women and belong to minority
22 groups;

23 “(D) the number of student veterans (and
24 spouses or partners and children of such stu-
25 dents) to whom services were offered as a result

1 of the award, and a description of the services
2 that were offered and provided; and

3 “(E) data enumerating whether the use of
4 the amounts awarded helped student veterans
5 at the institution or consortium toward comple-
6 tion of a degree, certificate, or credential;

7 “(4) best practices for student veteran success,
8 identified by reviewing data provided by institutions
9 and consortia that received a grant under this sec-
10 tion; and

11 “(5) a determination by the Secretary with re-
12 spect to whether the grant program under this sec-
13 tion should be extended or expanded.

14 “(f) DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES
15 WEBSITE.—Subject to the availability of appropriations
16 under subsection (h) and not later than 3 years after the
17 date on which the first grant is awarded under subsection
18 (a), the Secretary shall develop and implement a website
19 for Student Veteran Centers at institutions of higher edu-
20 cation, which details best practices for serving student vet-
21 erans at institutions of higher education.

22 “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 “(1) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—
24 The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the
25 meaning given the term in section 101.

1 “(2) STUDENT VETERAN CENTER.—The term
2 ‘Student Veteran Center’ means a dedicated space
3 on a campus of an institution of higher education
4 that provides students who are veterans, members of
5 the Armed Forces serving on active duty, or mem-
6 bers of a reserve component of the Armed Forces
7 with the following:

8 “(A) A lounge or meeting space for such
9 student veterans (and the spouses or partners
10 and children of such students), and veterans in
11 the community.

12 “(B) A centralized office for student vet-
13 eran services that—

14 “(i) is a single point of contact to co-
15 ordinate comprehensive support services
16 for student veterans;

17 “(ii) is staffed by trained employees
18 and volunteers, which includes veterans
19 and at least one full-time employee or vol-
20 unteer who is trained as a veterans’ bene-
21 fits counselor;

22 “(iii) provides student veterans with
23 assistance relating to—

24 “(I) transitioning from the mili-
25 tary to student life;

1 “(II) transitioning from the mili-
2 tary to the civilian workforce;

3 “(III) networking with other stu-
4 dent veterans and veterans in the
5 community;

6 “(IV) understanding and obtain-
7 ing benefits provided by the institu-
8 tion of higher education, Federal Gov-
9 ernment, and State for which such
10 students may be eligible;

11 “(V) understanding how to suc-
12 ceed in the institution of higher edu-
13 cation, including by understanding
14 academic policies, the course selection
15 process, and institutional policies and
16 practices related to the transfer of
17 academic credits; and

18 “(VI) understanding disability-re-
19 lated rights and protections under the
20 Americans with Disabilities Act of
21 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and
22 section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
23 of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794); and

24 “(iv) provides comprehensive academic
25 and tutoring services for student veterans,

1 including peer-to-peer tutoring and aca-
2 demic mentorship.

3 “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
4 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this part
5 such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026 and
6 each of the 7 succeeding fiscal years.”.

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