

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 4137

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide grants to outpatient mental health facilities for the provision of culturally competent, evidence-based mental health care for veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 18, 2026

Mrs. BLACKBURN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide grants to outpatient mental health facilities for the provision of culturally competent, evidence-based mental health care for veterans, 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 “Recognizing Commu-
5 nity Organizations for Veteran Engagement and Recovery
6 Act” or the “RECOVER Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PRO-**
2 **GRAM TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO MEDICAL FA-**
3 **CILITIES FOR THE PROVISION OF CUL-**
4 **TURALLY COMPETENT, EVIDENCE-BASED**
5 **MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS.**

6 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans
7 Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which the
8 Secretary shall award grants to mental health care pro-
9 viders for the provision of culturally competent, evidence-
10 based mental health care for veterans (in this section re-
11 ferred to as the “pilot program”).

12 (b) **DURATION.**—The Secretary shall carry out the
13 pilot program for a period of three years.

14 (c) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible to receive a grant
15 under the pilot program, a mental health care provider
16 shall—

17 (1) be a non-profit organization;

18 (2) have operated at least one outpatient men-
19 tal health facility in the United States for a contin-
20 uous period of not less than three years; and

21 (3) submit to the Secretary an application that
22 includes such information and assurances as the
23 Secretary may require, including—

24 (A) an identification of the outpatient fa-
25 cility or facilities where the provider will provide

1 mental health care to veterans using funds pro-
2 vided under the grant;

3 (B) a plan under which at least one clini-
4 cian employed by the provider at each facility
5 for which a grant is made is trained to provide
6 culturally competent veterans mental health
7 care pursuant to the requirements established
8 by the Secretary under subsection (g); and

9 (C) an identification of the percentage of
10 the operating budget for each such facility that
11 was provided through Federal grants during the
12 fiscal year preceding the year during which the
13 application is submitted.

14 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The recipient of a grant
16 under the pilot program shall use the grant—

17 (A) to provide culturally competent, evi-
18 dence-based mental health care for veterans;

19 (B) to operate an existing outpatient men-
20 tal health facility or establish a new outpatient
21 mental health facility for the purpose of pro-
22 viding such care; and

23 (C) to encourage veterans who are eligible
24 for enrollment in the patient enrollment system
25 of the Department of Veterans Affairs under

1 section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, to
2 enroll in such system and to receive medical
3 services furnished by the Department.

4 (2) LIMITATIONS.—The recipient of a grant
5 under the pilot program may not—

6 (A) charge any veteran a fee associated
7 with the receipt of mental health care under the
8 pilot program; or

9 (B) refuse to provide mental health care to
10 any veteran on the basis that the veteran is not
11 eligible for reimbursement for such care under
12 a health plan contract or any Federal, State, or
13 local government program.

14 (3) REIMBURSEMENT.—Nothing in this sub-
15 section shall prevent the recipient of a grant under
16 the pilot program from seeking or receiving reim-
17 bursement for all, or a portion, of the mental health
18 care provided to a veteran, including reimbursement
19 under a health plan contract, the Veterans Commu-
20 nity Care Program under section 1703 of title 38,
21 United States Code, or any other Federal, State, or
22 local government program.

23 (e) SELECTION OF FACILITIES.—In selecting out-
24 patient mental health facilities for the receipt of grants
25 under the pilot program, the Secretary—

1 (1) shall ensure that grants are distributed
2 evenly among outpatient mental health facilities lo-
3 cated in rural and urban areas;

4 (2) may consider the proportion of veterans his-
5 torically served by the outpatient mental health fa-
6 cilities; and

7 (3) may prioritize outpatient mental health fa-
8 cilities located in areas that the Secretary deter-
9 mines—

10 (A) are medically underserved;

11 (B) have large veteran populations;

12 (C) are located near military installations;

13 or

14 (D) have large numbers of veterans at high
15 risk of suicide.

16 (f) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
19 subparagraph (B), no grant under the pilot pro-
20 gram for a facility for any fiscal year may ex-
21 ceed \$1,500,000.

22 (B) LIMITATION.—In the case of an out-
23 patient mental health facility for which not less
24 than 50 percent of the operating budget of the
25 facility for the preceding fiscal year was pro-

1 vided through Federal grants, no grant under
2 the pilot program for the facility for any fiscal
3 year may exceed the lesser of—

4 (i) 50 percent of the operating budget
5 of the facility; or

6 (ii) \$1,500,000.

7 (2) MULTIPLE GRANTS.—The recipient of a
8 grant under the pilot program—

9 (A) may apply for, and receive, grants for
10 more than one facility of the recipient for any
11 fiscal year; and

12 (B) may apply for, and receive, a grant for
13 a facility that has already received a grant
14 under the pilot program.

15 (g) TRAINING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall
16 establish the requirements for the training referred to in
17 subsection (c)(3)(B).

18 (h) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe
19 regulations to carry out this section, which shall include
20 a requirement that each recipient of a grant under the
21 pilot program shall—

22 (1) demonstrate the capacity to provide ac-
23 countability;

24 (2) demonstrate clinical outcomes; and

1 (3) justify the effective use of any private in-
2 vestment funds or Federal grant funds through data
3 collection and reporting metrics.

4 (i) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the com-
5 pletion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit
6 to Congress a report on the pilot program that includes
7 the following:

8 (1) The number of veterans who received men-
9 tal health care under the pilot program.

10 (2) An identification of the demographics of the
11 veterans served.

12 (3) An identification of the types of mental
13 health care provided and the time period for which
14 such care was provided.

15 (4) An identification of outcomes of the pilot
16 program.

17 (5) The number of veterans who received men-
18 tal health care under the pilot program and subse-
19 quently enrolled in the patient enrollment system of
20 the Department of Veterans Affairs under section
21 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

22 (6) An identification of any obstacles faced by
23 grant recipients in providing mental health care
24 under the pilot program.

1 (j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
3 out the pilot program \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years
4 2025 through 2027.

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