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U.S. GOVERNMENT
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119TH CONGRESS
2D 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

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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.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Recognizing Community Organizations for Veteran Engagement and Recovery Act'' or the ''RECOVER Act''.

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES FOR THE PROVISION OF CULTURALLY COMPETENT, EVIDENCE-BASED MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall award grants to mental health care providers for the provision of culturally competent, evidence-based mental health care for veterans (in this section referred to as the ''pilot program'').

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

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

(1) be a non-profit organization;

(2) have operated at least one outpatient mental health facility in the United States for a continuous period of not less than three years; and

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

(A) an identification of the outpatient facility or facilities where the provider will provide

mental health care to veterans using funds provided under the grant;

(B) a plan under which at least one clinician employed by the provider at each facility for which a grant is made is trained to provide culturally competent veterans mental health care pursuant to the requirements established by the Secretary under subsection (g); and

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

(d) USE OF FUNDS.—

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

(A) to provide culturally competent, evidence-based mental health care for veterans;

(B) to operate an existing outpatient mental health facility or establish a new outpatient mental health facility for the purpose of providing such care; and

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

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

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

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

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

(3) REIMBURSEMENT.—Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the recipient of a grant under the pilot program from seeking or receiving reimbursement for all, or a portion, of the mental health care provided to a veteran, including reimbursement under a health plan contract, the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, or any other Federal, State, or local government program.

(e) SELECTION OF FACILITIES.—In selecting outpatient mental health facilities for the receipt of grants under the pilot program, the Secretary—

(1) shall ensure that grants are distributed evenly among outpatient mental health facilities located in rural and urban areas;

(2) may consider the proportion of veterans historically served by the outpatient mental health facilities; and

(3) may prioritize outpatient mental health facilities located in areas that the Secretary determines—

(A) are medically underserved;

(B) have large veteran populations;

(C) are located near military installations; or

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

(f) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), no grant under the pilot program for a facility for any fiscal year may exceed $1,500,000.

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

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

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

(ii) $1,500,000.

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

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

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

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

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

(1) demonstrate the capacity to provide accountability;

(2) demonstrate clinical outcomes; and

(3) justify the effective use of any private investment funds or Federal grant funds through data collection and reporting metrics.

(i) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program that includes the following:

(1) The number of veterans who received mental health care under the pilot program.

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

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

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

(5) The number of veterans who received mental health care under the pilot program and subsequently enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

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

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

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