

and SHAHEEN. Our bipartisan bill will make critical updates to ensure this important program can effectively serve even more households across the country.

Since 1976, the Weatherization Assistance Program has helped more than 7 million low-income households reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. The Department of Energy estimates that these upgrades help each household save \$372 or more in energy bills annually. Those energy savings free up limited financial resources for essentials, like groceries and medicine.

In addition to traditional services like attic and wall insulation, the program also provides services that help with home health and safety measures, such as installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Energy efficient homes also help cut down on our carbon footprint, reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.

An independent study of the Weatherization Assistance Program by Oak Ridge National Laboratory found that children in weatherized households miss less school, improving educational outcomes. Adults miss less work, increasing both their own incomes and their contributions to the economy. Families also reported experiencing fewer flu and cold symptoms and emergency room visits, decreasing costly medical expenses.

The Weatherization Assistance Program also helps boost our economy. The Department of Energy has reported that the program supports over 8,500 jobs while increasing our national economic output by \$1.2 billion per year.

The program is a win-win for all involved. That is why, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I have led my colleagues in supporting strong funding for it every year. And that is why I am introducing this bill—to ensure it continues to work for years to come.

This bill will help expand the program to many more low-income households that are currently unable to receive weatherization services because their homes need minor structural repairs before they can be weatherized. The bill will authorize a weatherization readiness fund to repair structural issues and prepare homes for weatherization assistance, increasing the number of homes the program is able to serve.

At the same time, it will raise the amount of funding allowed to be spent on each home to keep up with current labor and material costs, and it will raise the cap on the amount of funding allowed to be spent on renewable energy upgrades in each home. These provisions are essential updates to a program that has helped so many families over the past few decades.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this commonsense legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 162—HONORING THE MEMORY OF JEREIMA “JERI” BUSTAMANTE ON THE SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF HER PASSING

Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 162

Whereas Jereima “Jeri” Bustamante (referred to in this preamble as “Jeri Bustamante”) lived the American Dream;

Whereas, after moving from Panama to the United States with her family, Jeri Bustamante—

(1) attended Miami Beach Senior High School; and

(2) earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Communication and Media Sciences and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from Florida International University;

Whereas Jeri Bustamante had a tireless work ethic and a passion for communication and paid for her education by working while enrolled in school;

Whereas that tireless work ethic propelled Jeri Bustamante to professional success, beginning with an internship at a Miami television station and culminating in a period of service as press secretary to Governor Rick Scott;

Whereas the enthusiasm, compassion, tenacity, and vibrant energy of Jeri Bustamante are greatly missed by her family, friends, and coworkers;

Whereas the spirit of Jeri Bustamante lives on through the Jereima Bustamante Memorial Scholarship, which aims to help graduates of Miami Beach Senior High School achieve their goals and pursue the American Dream through a college education; and

Whereas April 8, 2025, marks 7 years since the life of Jeri Bustamante was tragically cut short in a fatal boating accident: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the life and memory of Jereima “Jeri” Bustamante (referred to in this resolution as “Jeri Bustamante”);

(2) offers heartfelt condolences to the family, loved ones, and friends of Jeri Bustamante;

(3) recognizes that living the American Dream remains possible for any individual who, following the example of Jeri Bustamante, works hard to pursue and achieve a goal; and

(4) encourages the recipients of the Jereima Bustamante Memorial Scholarship to carry on the legacy of Jeri Bustamante.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2222. Ms. LUMMIS (for Mr. MORAN) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 423, to protect regular order for budgeting for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

SA 2223. Ms. LUMMIS (for Mr. SHEEHY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 160, to amend the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 to reauthorize the sale by the Department of Defense of aircraft and parts for wildfire suppression purposes, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2222. Ms. LUMMIS (for Mr. MORAN) proposed an amendment to the

bill S. 423, to protect regular order for budgeting for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. PROTECTING REGULAR ORDER FOR VETERANS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the “Protecting Regular Order for Veterans Act of 2025” or the “PRO Veterans Act of 2025”.

(b) QUARTERLY BRIEFINGS ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGETARY SHORTFALLS.—

(1) QUARTERLY BRIEFINGS.—

(A) QUARTERLY BRIEFINGS REQUIRED.—During the first quarter beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act and in each quarter thereafter until the date that is three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to the appropriate committees of Congress a quarterly briefing, in person, on the budget of the Department of Veterans Affairs and any shortfall the Department may be experiencing.

(B) PLANS.—In any case in which the Secretary informs Congress during a briefing under paragraph (1) that the Department is experiencing a shortfall, the Secretary shall, during such briefing, present the plans of the Secretary to address or mitigate the shortfall.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(i) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(ii) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(B) SHORTFALL.—The term “shortfall”, with respect to a fiscal year, means that the amount of appropriations required by the Department of Veterans Affairs for such fiscal year to meet all of the statutory obligations of the Department during that fiscal year exceeds the amount of appropriations requested for the Department for that fiscal year in the budget of the President submitted pursuant to section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, for that fiscal year.

(c) LIMITATIONS ON PROVISION OF INCENTIVES FOR CRITICAL SKILLS TO SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Section 706(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(7)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B)(ii), a critical skill incentive may not be provided under paragraph (1) to an employee of the Department employed in a Senior Executive Service position, or a position in another comparable system for senior-level Government employees, as defined by the Secretary, whose position is at the Central Office of the Department, including the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration, regardless of the actual location where the employee performs the functions of the position.

“(B)(i) A critical skill incentive provided under paragraph (1) to an employee of the Department employed in a Senior Executive Service position, or a position in another comparable system for senior-level Government employees, as defined by the Secretary, not described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph may only be provided—

“(I) on an individual basis and may not be provided to a group of such employees; and

“(II) upon approval of the following officers or those serving in an acting capacity:

“(aa) The Under Secretary for Benefits, the Under Secretary for Health, or the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

“(bb) The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration.

“(cc) The Director of the Office of Management or the Chief Financial Officer.

“(dd) The Assistant Secretary for Accountability and Whistleblower Protection.

“(ee) The General Counsel.

“(ff) Such other officers as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(ii) In the case of an employee of the Department employed in a Senior Executive Service position, or a position in another comparable system for senior-level Government employees, as defined by the Secretary, whose position is primarily at the Central Office of the Department, but who performs some portion of the employee's job function at other facilities of the Department, as defined by the Secretary, not at Central Office—

“(I) the employee shall not be considered described in subparagraph (A) with respect to the portion of the employee's job function that is based out of non-Central Office facilities of the Department; and

“(II) any critical skill incentive provided under paragraph (1) to the employee for the portion of the employee's job function that is based out of facilities of the Department other than the Central Office shall be proportionate to the time spent at those Department facilities.

“(C)(i) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Protecting Regular Order for Veterans Act of 2025, and not less frequently than once each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives an annual report on the employees of the Department employed in a Senior Executive Service position, or a position in another comparable system for senior-level Government employees, as defined by the Secretary, who were provided a critical skill incentive under paragraph (1).

“(ii) Reports submitted pursuant to clause (i) may be submitted by incorporating their contents into other congressionally mandated reports to the committees described in such clause.

“(D) In this paragraph, the term ‘Senior Executive Service position’ has the meaning given such term in section 3132(a) of title 5.”.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS EXPERIENCE OFFICE.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the “Improving Veterans' Experience Act of 2025”.

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 3 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 325. Veterans experience office

“(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in the Department within the Office of the Secretary an office to be known as the ‘Veterans Experience Office’ (in this section referred to as the ‘Office’).

“(b) **HEAD OF OFFICE.**—(1) The head of the Office shall be the Chief Veterans Experience Officer.

“(2) The Chief Veterans Experience Officer shall—

“(A) be appointed by the Secretary from among individuals the Secretary considers qualified to perform the duties of the position;

“(B) report directly to the Secretary; and

“(C) be responsible for carrying out the functions of the Office set forth under subsection (c).

“(c) **FUNCTION.**—The functions of the Office are as follows:

“(1) Carrying out the key customer experience initiatives of the Department relating to veterans' and other beneficiaries' satisfaction with and usage of benefits and services furnished under laws administered by the Secretary for which they are eligible, including setting the strategy, framework, policy, and other guidance for the Department relating to customer experience, including ensuring the activities of the Office and those of other organizations and offices within the Department are coordinated and not duplicative.

“(2) Requiring the heads of other organizations and offices within the Department to report regularly on customer experience metrics, action plans, and other customer experience improvement efforts to the Chief Veterans Experience Officer.

“(3) Collecting veteran-derived data—

“(A) to determine veteran and beneficiary satisfaction with and usage of the benefits and services furnished under laws administered by the Secretary for which they are eligible; and

“(B) to be considered during policymaking.

“(4) Providing strategic guidance and strategies to Department entities for engaging with veterans and beneficiaries regarding benefits and services furnished under laws administered by the Secretary, including those not using such benefits and services.

“(5) Assessing and advising the Secretary on the accuracy and helpfulness of the websites and other customer-facing information of the Department, be it available electronically or in any other format.

“(6) Assessing and advising the Secretary on the status and opportunities for improvement of the customer service efforts of the Department.

“(d) **REPORTS.**—(1) Each year, the Chief Veterans Experience Officer shall submit to the Secretary a summary of the data received by the Chief Veterans Experience Officer under subsection (c)(2).

“(2) Each year, not later than 180 days after the date on which the Secretary receives the summary under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to Congress an annual summary and analysis of the matters summarized pursuant to such paragraph.

“(3) Each annual summary submitted pursuant to paragraph (2) shall include the following:

“(A) Data regarding customer service and experience feedback, disaggregated by benefit or service furnished under laws administered by the Secretary, and relevant demographic data of the veterans and beneficiaries providing the feedback.

“(B) Data regarding veteran and beneficiary satisfaction with and usage of benefits or services, disaggregated by benefit or service furnished under laws administered by the Secretary, and relevant demographic data of the veterans and beneficiaries providing the feedback, including—

“(i) potential reasons for not using the benefits or services, such as—

“(I) eligibility;

“(II) lack of knowledge or awareness of existence of benefit or service;

“(III) barriers of technology, information, or time; and

“(IV) other related reasons; and

“(ii) an analysis of how such reasons may be addressed.

“(e) **STAFF AND RESOURCES.**—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that—

“(A) the Office has such staff, resources, and access to customer service and experience information as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Office; and

“(B) any information provided to the Office does not include personally identifiable information of an individual veteran, survivor, dependent, or other beneficiary unless such

individual provides appropriate consent to allow such information to be shared with the Office.

“(2) Funds available for basic pay and other administrative expenses of other Department organizations and offices may be available to reimburse the Office for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs for services provided to such organizations if the Secretary determines that contributing to such costs will not undermine the ability of any such organization or office to provide services required by such office.

“(3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize an increase in the number of full-time employees otherwise authorized for the Department.

“(f) **PRIVACY.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the Chief Veterans Experience Officer to disclose any record in contravention of section 552a of title 5 (commonly referred to as the ‘Privacy Act of 1974’).

“(g) **SUNSET.**—The requirements and authorities of this section shall terminate on September 30, 2028.”.

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 3 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“325. Veterans Experience Office.”.

(c) **COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES REVIEW OF VETERANS EXPERIENCE OFFICE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS.**—Not later than 540 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) complete an analysis of the methodology, effectiveness, and implementation of findings and feedback of veterans and beneficiaries used by the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the Veterans Experience Office, to improve veteran and beneficiary customer experience and satisfaction, including through the use of what are known as “trust-scores”, Veteran Signals also known as “VSignals”, and related survey and data collection activities, processes, and initiatives; and

(2) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth the findings of the Comptroller General with respect to the analysis completed pursuant to paragraph (1).

SA 2223. Ms. LUMMIS (for Mr. SHEEHY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 160, to amend the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 to reauthorize the sale by the Department of Defense of aircraft and parts for wildfire suppression purposes, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 3, line 3, strike “October 1, 2025,” and insert “the date of the enactment of the Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate: