

ment the amendments made by subsection (a) [enacting section 4127 of this title and amending this section and sections 4021 and 4022 of this title].”

CHAPTER 88—MILITARY FAMILY PROGRAMS AND MILITARY CHILD CARE

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SUBCHAPTER I—MILITARY FAMILY PROGRAMS

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Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2021—Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title V, § 583(b), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3654, which directed amendment of the table of sections at the beginning of chapter 88 by adding item 1788a and striking out former item 1788a “Family support programs: immediate family members of members of special operations forces”, was executed to the analysis of this subchapter, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

2017—Pub. L. 115-91, div. A, title V, § 555(e), Dec. 12, 2017, 131 Stat. 1403, added item 1788a.

2016—Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title IX, § 933(a)(4)(B), (b)(5)(B), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2364, 2365, substituted “Office of Military Family Readiness Policy” for “Office of Family Policy” in item 1781 and “Office of Special Needs” for “Office of Community Support for Military Families With Special Needs” in item 1781c.

2011—Pub. L. 112-74, div. A, title VIII, § 8070(b), Dec. 23, 2011, 125 Stat. 823, added item 1790.

2009—Pub. L. 111-84, div. A, title V, § 563(a)(2), Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2307, added item 1781c.

2008—Pub. L. 110-417, [div. A], title V, § 582(b), Oct. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 4474, added item 1784a.

Pub. L. 110-181, div. A, title V, § 581(d), Jan. 28, 2008, 122 Stat. 122, added items 1781a and 1781b.

2003—Pub. L. 108-136, div. A, title V, § 582(a)(2), Nov. 24, 2003, 117 Stat. 1490, added item 1789.

2002—Pub. L. 107-314, div. A, title VI, § 652(a)(2), Dec. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 2581, added item 1788.

§ 1781. Office of Military Family Readiness Policy

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is in the Office of the Secretary of Defense an Office of Military Family Readiness Policy (in this section referred to as the “Office”). The Office shall be headed by the Director of Military Family Readiness Policy, who shall serve within the Office of

the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

(b) DUTIES.—The Office—

(1) shall coordinate programs and activities of the military departments to the extent that they relate to military families; and

(2) shall make recommendations to the Secretaries of the military departments with respect to programs and policies regarding military families.

(c) STAFF.—The Office shall have not less than five professional staff members.

(d) NON-MEDICAL COUNSELING SERVICES.—(1) In carrying out its duties under subsection (b), the Office may coordinate programs and activities to provide non-medical counseling services to military families through the Department of Defense Military and Family Life Counseling Program.

(2) A mental health care professional described in paragraph (3) may provide non-medical counseling services at any location in a State, the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States, without regard to where the professional or recipient of such services is located or delivery of such services is provided (including face-to-face and telehealth), if the provision of such services is within the scope of the authorized Federal duties of the professional.

(3) A non-medical mental health professional described in this subsection is a person who is—

(A) a currently licensed mental health care provider who holds a license that is—

(i) issued by a State, the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States; and

(ii) recognized by the Secretary of Defense as an appropriate license for the provision of non-medical counseling services;

(B) a member of the armed forces, a civilian employee of the Department of Defense, or a contractor designated by the Secretary; and

(C) performing authorized duties for the Department of Defense under a program or activity referred to in paragraph (1).

(4) The authority under this subsection shall terminate three years after the date of the enactment of this subsection.

(5) In this subsection, the term “non-medical counseling services” means mental health care services that are non-clinical, short-term and solution focused, and address topics related to personal growth, development, and positive functioning.

(Added Pub. L. 104-106, div. A, title V, § 568(a)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 330; amended Pub. L. 111-383, div. A, title IX, § 901(h), Jan. 7, 2011, 124 Stat. 4323; Pub. L. 112-239, div. A, title X, § 1076(f)(21), Jan. 2, 2013, 126 Stat. 1952; Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title IX, § 933(a)(1), (4)(A), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2364; Pub. L. 118-31, div. A, title V, § 581, Dec. 22, 2023, 137 Stat. 279.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The date of the enactment of this subsection, referred to in subsec. (d)(4), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 118-31, which was approved Dec. 22, 2023.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this subchapter were contained in Pub. L. 99-145, title VIII, Nov. 8, 1985, 99 Stat. 678, as amended, which was set out as a note under section 113 of this title, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 104-106, § 568(e)(1).

AMENDMENTS

2023—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 118-31 added subsec. (d).

2016—Pub. L. 114-328, § 933(a)(4)(A), substituted “Office of Military Family Readiness Policy” for “Office of Family Policy” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 114-328, § 933(a)(1), substituted “Office of Military Family Readiness Policy” for “Office of Family Policy” and “Director of Military Family Readiness Policy” for “Director of Family Policy”.

2013—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 112-239, in first sentence, substituted “in the Office” for “in the Director” and struck out “hereinafter” before “in this section”, and in second sentence, substituted “Office” for “office” in two places.

2011—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 111-383 substituted “the Director” for “the Office” before “of the Secretary” and “The office shall be headed by the Director of Family Policy, who shall serve within the office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.” for “The Office shall be under the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel.”

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2011 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-383 effective Jan. 1, 2011, see section 901(p) of Pub. L. 111-383, set out as a note under section 131 of this title.

ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Pub. L. 117-81, div. A, title V, § 549(c), (d), (g), Dec. 27, 2021, 135 Stat. 1715, 1719, 1721, provided that:

“(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Consistent with the recommendations set forth in the report of the Comptroller General of the United States titled ‘Domestic Abuse: Actions Needed to Enhance DOD’s Prevention, Response, and Oversight’ (GAO-21-289), the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall carry out the activities specified in subparagraphs (A) through (K).

“(A) DOMESTIC ABUSE DATA.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 27, 2021], the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall carry out each of the following:

“(i) Issue guidance to the Secretaries of the military departments to clarify and standardize the process for collecting and reporting data on domestic abuse in the Armed Forces, including—

“(I) data on the numbers and types of domestic abuse incidents involving members of the Armed Forces; and

“(II) data for inclusion in the reports required to be submitted under section 574 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328; 130 Stat. 2141).

“(ii) Develop a quality control process to ensure the accurate and complete reporting of data on allegations of abuse involving a member of the Armed Forces, including allegations of abuse that do not meet the Department of Defense definition of domestic abuse.

“(iii) Expand the scope of any reporting to Congress that includes data on domestic abuse in the Armed Forces to include data on and analysis of the types of allegations of domestic abuse.

“(B) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND COMMAND ACTION DATA.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the

enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall—

“(i) evaluate the organizations and elements of the Department of Defense that are responsible for tracking domestic violence incidents and the command actions taken in response to such incidents to determine if there are actions that may be carried out to—

“(I) eliminate gaps and redundancies in the activities of such organizations;

“(II) ensure consistency in the approaches of such organizations to the tracking of such incidents and actions; and

“(III) otherwise improve the tracking of such incidents and actions across the Department; “(ii) based on the evaluation under clause (i), clarify or adjust—

“(I) the duties of such organizations and elements; and

“(II) the manner in which such organizations and elements coordinate their activities; and

“(iii) issue guidance to the Secretaries of the military departments to clarify and standardize the information required to be collected and reported to the database on domestic violence incidents under section 1562 of title 10, United States Code.

“(C) REGULATIONS FOR VIOLATION OF CIVILIAN ORDERS OF PROTECTION.—The Secretary of Defense shall revise or issue regulations (as applicable) to ensure that each Secretary of a military department provides, to any member of the Armed Forces under the jurisdiction of such Secretary who is subject to a civilian order of protection, notice that the violation of such order may be punishable under chapter 47 of title 10, United States Code (the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

“(D) AGREEMENTS WITH CIVILIAN VICTIM SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS.—

“(i) GUIDANCE REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall issue guidance pursuant to which personnel of a Family Advocacy Program at a military installation may enter into memoranda of understanding with qualified civilian victim service organizations for purposes of providing services to victims of domestic abuse in accordance with clause (ii).

“(ii) CONTENTS OF AGREEMENT.—A memorandum of understanding entered into under clause (i) shall provide that personnel of a Family Advocacy Program at a military installation may refer a victim of domestic abuse to a qualified civilian victim service organization if such personnel determine that—

“(I) the services offered at the installation are insufficient to meet the victim’s needs; or

“(II) such a referral would otherwise benefit the victim.

“(E) SCREENING AND REPORTING OF INITIAL ALLEGATIONS.—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall develop and implement a standardized process—

“(i) to ensure consistency in the manner in which allegations of domestic abuse are screened and documented at military installations, including by ensuring that allegations of domestic abuse are documented regardless of the severity of the incident; and

“(ii) to ensure consistency in the form and manner in which such allegations are presented to Incident Determination Committees.

“(F) IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT OF INCIDENT DETERMINATION COMMITTEES.—

“(i) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall ensure that Incident Determination Committees are fully implemented within each Armed Force.

“(ii) OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING.—The Secretary of Defense shall—

“(I) direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to conduct oversight of the activities of the Incident Determination Committees of the Armed Forces on an ongoing basis; and

“(II) establish a formal process through which the Under Secretary will monitor Incident Determination Committees to ensure that the activities of such Committees are conducted in an [sic] consistent manner in accordance with the applicable policies of the Department of Defense and the Armed Forces.

“(G) REASONABLE SUSPICION STANDARD FOR INCIDENT REPORTING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Act, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall issue regulations—

“(i) under which the personnel of a Family Advocacy Program shall be required to report an allegation of domestic abuse to an Incident Determination Committee if there is reasonable suspicion that the abuse occurred; and

“(ii) that fully define and establish standardized criteria for determining whether an allegation of abuse meets the reasonable suspicion standard referred to in clause (i).

“(H) GUIDANCE FOR VICTIM RISK ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall issue guidance that—

“(i) identifies the risk assessment tools that must be used by Family Advocacy Program personnel to assess reports of domestic abuse; and

“(ii) establishes minimum qualifications for the personnel responsible for using such tools.

“(I) IMPROVING FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS.—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall develop and implement—

“(i) a communications strategy to support the Armed Forces in increasing awareness of the options and resources available for reporting incidents of domestic abuse; and

“(ii) metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of domestic abuse awareness campaigns within the Department of Defense and the Armed Forces, including by identifying a target audience and defining measurable objectives for such campaigns.

“(J) ASSESSMENT OF THE DISPOSITION MODEL FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.—As part of the independent analysis required by section 549C of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-283) [134 Stat. 3625] the Secretary of Defense shall include an assessment of—

“(i) the risks and consequences of the disposition model for domestic violence in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act, including the risks and consequences of such model with respect to—

“(I) the eligibility of victims for transitional compensation and other benefits; and

“(II) the eligibility of perpetrators of domestic violence to possess firearms and any related effects on the military service of such individuals; and

“(ii) the feasibility and advisability of establishing alternative disposition models for domestic violence, including an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of each proposed model.

“(K) FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM TRAINING.—

“(i) TRAINING FOR COMMANDERS AND SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISORS.—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall—

“(I) ensure that the Family Advocacy Program training provided to installation-level

commanders and senior enlisted advisors of the Armed Forces meets the applicable requirements of the Department of Defense; and

“(II) shall provide such additional guidance and sample training materials as may be necessary to improve the consistency of such training.

“(ii) TRAINING FOR CHAPLAINS.—The Secretary of Defense shall—

“(I) require that chaplains of the Armed Forces receive Family Advocacy Program training;

“(II) establish content requirements and learning objectives for such training; and

“(III) provide such additional guidance and sample training materials as may be necessary to effectively implement such training.

“(iii) TRAINING COMPLETION DATA.—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall develop a process to ensure the quality and completeness of data indicating whether members of the Armed Forces who are required to complete Family Advocacy Program training, including installation-level commanders and senior enlisted advisors, have completed such training.

“(2) GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE.—Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (1), the Secretary of Defense shall complete the implementation of the activities specified in such paragraph by not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

“(3) QUARTERLY STATUS BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and on a quarterly basis thereafter until the date on which all of the activities specified in paragraph (1) have been implemented, the Secretary of Defense shall provide to the appropriate congressional committees a briefing on the status of the implementation of such activities.

“(d) INFORMATION ON SERVICES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES.—Each Secretary of a military department shall ensure that a military family member who reports an incident of domestic abuse or child abuse and neglect to a Family Advocacy Program under the jurisdiction of such Secretary receives comprehensive information, in a clear and easily understandable format, on the services available to such family member in connection with such incident. Such information shall include a complete guide to the following:

“(1) The Family Advocacy Program of the Armed Force or military department concerned.

“(2) Military law enforcement services, including an explanation of the process that follows a report of an incident of domestic abuse or child abuse or neglect.

“(3) Other applicable victim services.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

“(2) The term ‘civilian order of protection’ has the meaning given that term in section 1561a of title 10, United States Code.

“(3) The term ‘disposition model for domestic violence’ means the process to determine—

“(A) the disposition of charges of an offense of domestic violence under section 928b of title 10, United States Code (article 128b of the Uniform Code of Military Justice); and

“(B) consequences of such disposition for members of the Armed Forces determined to have committed such offense and the victims of such offense.

“(4) The term ‘Incident Determination Committee’ means a committee established at a military installation that is responsible for reviewing reported incidents of domestic abuse and determining whether such incidents constitute harm to the victims of such abuse according to the applicable criteria of the Department of Defense.

“(5) The term ‘qualified civilian victim service organization’ means an organization outside the Department of Defense that—

“(A) is approved by the Secretary of Defense for the purpose of providing legal or other services to victims of domestic abuse; and

“(B) is located in a community surrounding a military installation.

“(6) The term ‘risk assessment tool’ means a process or technology that may be used to evaluate a report of an incident of domestic abuse to determine the likelihood that the abuse will escalate or recur.”

FAMILY READINESS: DEFINITIONS; COMMUNICATION STRATEGY; REVIEW; REPORT

Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title V, §581, Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3651, provided that:

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act [Jan. 1, 2021], the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall act on recommendation one of the report, dated July 2019, of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, titled ‘Strengthening the Military Family Readiness System for a Changing American Society’, by establishing definitions of ‘family well-being’, ‘family readiness’, and ‘family resilience’ for use by the Department of Defense.

“(b) COMMUNICATION STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall—

“(1) ensure that the Secretary of Defense has carried out section 561 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 ([Pub. L. 111-84]; 10 U.S.C. 1781 note);

“(2) implement a strategy to use of a variety of modes of communication to ensure the broadest means of communicating with military families; and

“(3) establish a process to measure the effectiveness of the modes of communication described in paragraph (2).

“(c) REVIEW.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall conduct a review of current programs, policies, services, resources, and practices of the Department for military families as outlined in recommendation four of the report described in subsection (a).

“(d) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after completing the review under subsection (c), the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report detailing the results of the review and how the Secretary shall improve programs, policies, services, resources, and practices for military families, based on the review.”

TIME REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION OF HONORABLE SERVICE

Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, §526, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1356, provided that: “The Secretary of Defense shall publish regulations for submission and processing of a completed United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Form N-426, by a member of the Armed Forces. Such regulations shall designate the appropriate level for the certifying officer as well as establish time requirements for the form to be returned to the member of the Armed Forces.”

COUNSELING FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO ARE NOT CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES ON NATURALIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, §570D, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1399, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary concerned shall furnish to covered individuals under the jurisdiction of that Secretary counseling regarding how to apply for naturalization in the United States.

“(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘covered individual’ means a member of the Armed Forces who is not a citizen of the United States.

“(2) The term ‘Secretary concerned’ has the meaning given that term in section 101(a)(9) of title 10, United States Code.”

PILOT PROGRAM ON INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND DESIGNATED RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES REGARDING THE EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES OF MILITARY SERVICE

Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, §570E, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1400, provided that:

“(a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 20, 2019], the Secretary of Defense shall seek to enter into an agreement with the American Red Cross to carry out a pilot program under which the American Red Cross—

“(A) encourages a member of the Armed Forces, upon the enlistment or appointment of such member, to designate up to 10 persons to whom information regarding the military service of such member shall be disseminated using contact information obtained under paragraph (6); and

“(B) provides such persons, within 30 days after the date on which such persons are designated under subparagraph (A), the option to elect to receive such information regarding military service.

“(2) DISSEMINATION.—The Secretary shall disseminate information described in paragraph (1)(A) under the pilot program on a regular basis.

“(3) TYPES OF INFORMATION.—The types of information to be disseminated under the pilot program to persons who elect to receive such information shall include information regarding—

“(A) aspects of daily life and routine experienced by members of the Armed Forces;

“(B) the challenges and stresses of military service, particularly during and after deployment as part of a contingency operation;

“(C) the services available to members of the Armed Forces and the dependents of such members to cope with the experiences and challenges of military service;

“(D) benefits administered by the Department of Defense for members of the Armed Forces and the dependents of such members;

“(E) a toll-free telephone number through which such persons who elect to receive information under the pilot program may request information regarding the program; and

“(F) such other information as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

“(4) PRIVACY OF INFORMATION.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary may not disseminate information under paragraph (3) in violation of laws and regulations pertaining to the privacy of members of the Armed Forces, including requirements pursuant to—

“(A) section 552a of title 5, United States Code; and

“(B) the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-191) [see Tables for classification].

“(5) NOTICE AND MODIFICATIONS.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces—

“(A) ensure that such member is notified of the ability to modify designations made by such member under paragraph (1)(A); and

“(B) upon the request of a member, authorize such member to modify such designations at any time.

“(6) CONTACT INFORMATION.—In making a designation under the pilot program, a member of the Armed Forces shall provide necessary contact information, specifically including an email address, to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding the military service of the member.

“(7) OPT-IN AND OPT-OUT OF PROGRAM.—

“(A) OPT-IN BY MEMBERS.—A member may participate in the pilot program only if the member voluntarily elects to participate in the program. A member seeking to make such an election shall make such election in a manner, and by including such information, as the Secretary and the Red Cross shall jointly specify for purposes of the pilot program.

“(B) OPT-IN BY DESIGNATED RECIPIENTS.—A person designated pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) may receive information under the pilot program only if the person makes the election described in paragraph (1)(B).

“(C) OPT-OUT.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall, with respect to a person who has elected to receive information under such pilot program, cease disseminating such information to that person upon request of such person.

“(b) SURVEY AND REPORT ON PILOT PROGRAM.—

“(1) SURVEY.—Not later than two years after the date on which the pilot program commences, the Secretary, in consultation with the American Red Cross, shall administer a survey to persons who elected to receive information under the pilot program for the purpose of receiving feedback regarding the quality of information disseminated under this section, including whether such information appropriately reflects the military career progression of members of the Armed Forces.

“(2) REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date on which the pilot program commences, the Secretary shall submit to the congressional defense committees [Committees on Armed Services and Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives] a final report on the pilot program which includes—

“(A) the results of the survey administered under paragraph (1);

“(B) a determination as to whether the pilot program should be made permanent; and

“(C) recommendations as to modifications necessary to improve the program if made permanent.

“(c) TERMINATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot program shall terminate upon submission of the report required by subsection (b)(2).”

EXPANSION OF PERIOD OF AVAILABILITY OF MILITARY ONE-SOURCE PROGRAM FOR RETIRED AND DISCHARGED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILIES

Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title V, § 558, Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1775, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, the period of eligibility for the Military OneSource program of the Department of Defense of an eligible individual retired, discharged, or otherwise released from the Armed Forces, and for the eligible immediate family members of such an individual, shall be the one-year period beginning on the date of the retirement, discharge, or release, as applicable, of such individual.

“(b) INFORMATION TO FAMILIES.—The Secretary shall, in such manner as the Secretary considers appropriate, inform military families and families of veterans of the Armed Forces of the wide range of benefits available through the Military OneSource program.”

POLICY ON RESPONSE TO JUVENILE-ON-JUVENILE PROBLEMATIC SEXUAL BEHAVIOR COMMITTED ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title X, § 1089, Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1996, provided that:

“(a) POLICY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense shall establish a policy, applicable across the military installations of the Department of Defense (including installations outside the United States), on the response of the Department to allegations of juvenile-on-juvenile problematic sexual behavior on military installations. The policy shall be designed to ensure a

consistent, standardized response to such allegations across the Department.

“(b) ELEMENTS.—The policy required by this section shall provide for the following:

“(1) Any report or other allegation of juvenile-on-juvenile problematic sexual behavior on a military installation that is received by the installation commander, a law enforcement organization, a Family Advocacy Program, a child development center, a military treatment facility, or a Department school operating on the installation or otherwise under Department administration for the installation shall be reviewed by the Family Advocacy Program of the installation.

“(2) Personnel of Family Advocacy Programs conducting reviews shall have appropriate training and experience in working with juveniles.

“(3) Family Advocacy Programs conducting reviews shall conduct a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary review and recommend treatment, counseling, or other appropriate interventions for complainants and respondents.

“(4) Each review shall be conducted—

“(A) with full involvement of appropriate authorities and entities, including parents or legal guardians of the juveniles involved (if practicable); and

“(B) to the extent practicable, in a manner that protects the sensitive nature of the incident concerned, using language appropriate to the treatment of juveniles in written policies and communication with families.

“(5) The requirement for investigation of a report or other allegation shall not be deemed to terminate or alter any otherwise applicable requirement to report or forward the report or allegation to appropriate Federal, State, or local authorities as possible criminal activity.

“(6) There shall be established and maintained a centralized database of information on each incident of problematic sexual behavior that is reviewed by a Family Advocacy Program under the policy established under this section, with—

“(A) the information in such database kept strictly confidential; and

“(B) because the information involves alleged conduct by juveniles, additional special precautions taken to ensure the information is available only to persons who require access to the information.

“(7) There shall be entered into the database, for each substantiated or unsubstantiated incident of problematic sexual behavior, appropriate information on the incident, including—

“(A) a description of the allegation;

“(B) whether or not the review is completed;

“(C) whether or not the incident was subject to an investigation by a law enforcement organization or entity, and the status and results of such investigation; and

“(D) whether or not action was taken in response to the incident, and the nature of the action, if any, so taken.”

PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON NATURALIZATION THROUGH MILITARY SERVICE

Pub. L. 115-91, div. A, title V, § 530, Dec. 12, 2017, 131 Stat. 1383, provided that: “The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps who are aliens lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence are informed of the availability of naturalization through service in the Armed Forces under section 328 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1439) and the process by which to pursue naturalization. The Secretary shall ensure that resources are available to assist qualified members of the Armed Forces to navigate the application and naturalization process.”

SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS PROVIDING CAMP EXPERIENCE FOR CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES

Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title V, § 577, Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2143, provided that:

“(a) AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT.—The Secretary of Defense may provide financial or non-monetary support to qualified nonprofit organizations in order to assist such organizations in carrying out programs to support the attendance at a camp, or camp-like setting, of children of military families who have experienced the death of a family member or other loved one or who have another family member living with a substance use disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder.

“(b) APPLICATION FOR SUPPORT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each organization seeking support pursuant to subsection (a) shall submit to the Secretary of Defense an application therefor containing such information as the Secretary shall specify for purposes of this section.

“(2) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) A description of the program for which support is being sought, including the location of the setting or settings under the program, the duration of such setting or settings, any local partners participating in or contributing to the program, and the ratio of counselors, trained volunteers, or both to children at such setting or settings.

“(B) An estimate of the number of children of military families to be supported using the support sought.

“(C) A description of the type of activities that will be conducted using the support sought, including the manner in which activities are particularly supportive to children of military families described in subsection (a).

“(D) A description of the outreach conducted or to be conducted by the organization to military families regarding the program.

“(c) USE OF SUPPORT.—Support provided by the Secretary of Defense to an organization pursuant to subsection (a) shall be used by the organization to support attendance at a camp, or camp-like setting, of children of military families described in subsection (a).”

ESTABLISHMENT OF ONLINE RESOURCES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT BENEFITS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Pub. L. 111-84, div. A, title V, §561, Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2302, as amended by Pub. L. 118-159, div. A, title VI, §634, Dec. 23, 2024, 138 Stat. 1937, provided that:

“(a) INTERNET OUTREACH WEBSITE.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Defense shall establish an Internet website or other online resources for the purpose of providing comprehensive information to members of the Armed Forces and their families about the benefits and services described in subsection (b) that are available to members of the Armed Forces and their families.

“(2) CONTACT INFORMATION.—The online resources shall provide contact information, both telephone and e-mail, that a member of the Armed Forces or dependent of the member can use to get specific information about benefits and services that may be available for the member or dependent.

“(b) COVERED BENEFITS AND SERVICES.—The information provided through the online resources established pursuant to subsection (a) shall include information regarding the following benefits and services that may be available to a member of the Armed Forces and dependents of the member:

“(1) Financial compensation, including financial counseling.

“(2) Health care and life insurance programs.

“(3) Death benefits.

“(4) Entitlements and survivor benefits for dependents, including offsets in the receipt of such benefits under the Survivor Benefit Plan and in connection with the receipt of dependency and indemnity compensation.

“(5) Educational assistance benefits, including limitations on and the transferability of such assistance.

“(6) Housing assistance benefits, including counseling.

“(7) Relocation planning and preparation.

“(8) Maintaining military records.

“(9) Legal assistance.

“(10) Quality of life programs.

“(11) Programs that encourage paternal engagement with the family.

“(12) Family and community programs.

“(13) Employment assistance upon separation or retirement of a member or for the spouse of the member.

“(14) Reserve component service for members completing service in a regular component.

“(15) Disability benefits, including offsets in connection with the receipt of such benefits.

“(16) Benefits and services provided under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

“(17) Such other benefits and services as the Secretary of Defense considers appropriate.

“(c) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON AVAILABILITY ON ONLINE RESOURCES.—The Secretaries of the military departments shall use public service announcements, publications, and such other announcements through the general media as the Secretaries consider appropriate to inform members of the Armed Forces and their families and the general public about the information available through the online resources established pursuant to subsection (a).

“(d) IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 28, 2009], the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees [Committees on Armed Services and Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives] a report on the quality and scope of the online resources established pursuant to subsection (a) to provide information about benefits and services for members of the Armed Forces and their families.”

EDUCATION AND TREATMENT SERVICES FOR MILITARY DEPENDENT CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Pub. L. 110-181, div. A, title V, §587, Jan. 28, 2008, 122 Stat. 133, which related to comprehensive assessment of the availability of Federal, State, and local education and treatment services for military dependent children with autism, was repealed by Pub. L. 111-84, div. A, title V, §563(a)(3), Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2307.

JOINT FAMILY SUPPORT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Pub. L. 109-364, div. A, title VI, §675, Oct. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 2273, as amended by Pub. L. 111-383, div. A, title V, §584, Jan. 7, 2011, 124 Stat. 4228, provided that:

“(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense shall carry out a joint family support assistance program for the purpose of providing to families of members of the Armed Forces the following types of assistance:

“(1) Financial and material assistance.

“(2) Mobile support services.

“(3) Sponsorship of volunteers and family support professionals for the delivery of support services.

“(4) Coordination of family assistance programs and activities provided by Military OneSource, Military Family Life Consultants, counselors, the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, and non-profit entities.

“(5) Facilitation of discussion on military family assistance programs, activities, and initiatives between and among the organizations, agencies, and entities referred to in paragraph (4).

“(6) Such other assistance that the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary of Defense shall carry out the program in not less than six areas of the United States selected by the Secretary. At least three of the areas selected for the program shall be areas that are geographically isolated from military installations.

“(c) RESOURCES AND VOLUNTEERS.—The Secretary of Defense shall provide personnel and other resources of

the Department of Defense necessary for the implementation and operation of the program and may accept and utilize the services of non-Government volunteers and non-profit entities under the program.

“(d) PROCEDURES.—The Secretary of Defense shall establish procedures for the operation of the program and for the provision of assistance to families of members of the Armed Forces under the program.

“(e) RELATION TO FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS.—The program is not intended to operate in lieu of existing family support centers, but is instead intended to augment the activities of the family support centers.

“(f) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—

“(1) PLAN REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which funds are first obligated for the program, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees [Committees on Armed Services and Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives] a report setting forth a plan for the implementation of the program.

“(2) ELEMENTS.—The plan required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) A description of the actions taken to select the areas in which the program will be conducted.

“(B) A description of the procedures established under subsection (d).

“(C) A review of proposed actions to be taken under the program to improve coordination of family assistance program and activities between and among the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, and non-profit entities.

“(g) REPORT.—

“(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 270 days after the date on which funds are first obligated for the program, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees [Committees on Armed Services and Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives] a report on the program.

“(2) ELEMENTS.—The report shall include the following:

“(A) A description of the program, including the areas in which the program is conducted, the procedures established under subsection (d) for operation of the program, and the assistance provided through the program for families of members of the Armed Forces.

“(B) An assessment of the effectiveness of the program in providing assistance to families of members of the Armed Forces.

“(C) An assessment of the advisability of extending the program or making it permanent.

“(h) DURATION.—The authority to carry out the program shall expire on December 31, 2012.”

RECOGNITION OF MILITARY FAMILIES

Pub. L. 108-136, div. A, title V, §581, Nov. 24, 2003, 117 Stat. 1489, provided that:

“(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

“(1) The families of both active and reserve component members of the Armed Forces, through their sacrifices and their dedication to the Nation and its values, contribute immeasurably to the readiness of the Armed Forces.

“(2) Without the continued support of military families, the Nation’s ability to sustain a high quality all-volunteer military force would be undermined.

“(3) In the perilous and challenging times of the global war on terrorism, with hundreds of thousands of active and reserve component military personnel deployed overseas in places of combat and other imminent danger, military families are making extraordinary sacrifices and will be required to do so for the foreseeable future.

“(4) Beginning in 1997, military family service and support centers have responded to the encouragement and support of private, non-profit organizations to recognize and honor the American military family during the Thanksgiving period each November.

“(b) MILITARY FAMILY RECOGNITION.—In view of the findings in subsection (a), Congress determines that it is appropriate that special measures be taken annually to recognize and honor the American military family.

“(c) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of Defense shall—

“(1) implement and sustain programs, including appropriate ceremonies and activities, to recognize and honor the contributions and sacrifices of the American military family, including families of both active and reserve component military personnel;

“(2) focus the celebration of the American military family during a specific period of each year to give full and proper recognition to those families; and

“(3) seek the assistance and support of appropriate civilian organizations, associations, and other entities (A) in carrying out the annual celebration of the American military family, and (B) in sustaining other, longer-term efforts to support the American military family.”

Executive Documents

SUPPORTING NEW AMERICAN SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

Memorandum of President of the United States, Dec. 22, 2016, 81 F.R. 95849, provided:

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

My Administration has maintained a steadfast commitment to honor and serve the brave men and women who have served this country. Like all service members and veterans, foreign-born residents and naturalized citizens serving in the United States Armed Forces are shining examples of the American dream. These brave new Americans have taken the extraordinary step of answering the call to duty, to support and defend our country. Some have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country before becoming American citizens.

New American service members are undoubtedly a critical element of our national security. They risk their lives all over the world in the name of the United States, securing shipping lanes, protecting bases and embassies, providing medical assistance, and conducting humanitarian missions. Tens of thousands of lawful permanent residents and naturalized U.S. citizens currently serve in our Armed Forces. Many more are veterans who have served previously in the Armed Forces. Additionally, many U.S.-born service members have immediate family members who were born abroad.

Over the past decade, the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security have strengthened partnerships to provide services and opportunities to service members, veterans, and their families interacting with the U.S. immigration system. Indeed, since 2001, more than 110,000 service members have been naturalized and many were assisted in the process through partnerships such as the “Naturalization at Basic Training Initiative,” which gives non-citizen enlistees the opportunity to naturalize during basic training. Despite these efforts, service members, veterans, and their families still face barriers to accessing immigration benefits and other assistance for which they may be eligible.

In light of the sacrifices that all of these individuals make and have made for our country, it is critical that executive departments and agencies (agencies) enhance collaboration and streamline processes to ensure that they receive the services and benefits they need and have earned. Therefore, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to address the issues facing new American service members, veterans, and their families, I hereby direct as follows:

SECTION 1. *Interagency Working Group to Support New American Service Members, Veterans, and their Families.* There is established a Working Group to Support New American Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (Working Group) to coordinate records, benefits,

and immigration and citizenship services for these service members, veterans, and their families. The Working Group shall convene its first meeting within 10 days of the date of this memorandum.

(a) The Working Group shall consist of representatives from:

- (i) the Department of State;
- (ii) the Department of Defense;
- (iii) the Department of Justice;
- (iv) the Department of Labor;
- (v) the Department of Veterans Affairs; and
- (vi) the Department of Homeland Security.

(b) The Working Group shall consult with additional agencies or offices, as appropriate.

SEC. 2. *Mission and Functions of the Working Group.* (a) The Working Group shall coordinate agency efforts to support service members, veterans, and their families who are navigating the immigration, veterans, and military systems. Such efforts shall include:

(i) coordinating the sharing of military records and other information relevant to immigration or veterans benefits;

(ii) enhancing awareness of naturalization and immigration benefits to provide timely assistance and information to service members, veterans, and their families;

(iii) coordinating and facilitating the process of adjudicating immigration applications and petitions; and

(iv) other efforts that further support service members, veterans, and their families.

(b) Within 30 days of the date of this memorandum, the Working Group shall develop an initial 3-year strategic action plan that details broad approaches to be taken to enhance access to services and benefits. This initial plan shall be supplemented by a more detailed plan, to be published within 120 days of the date of this memorandum that discusses the steps to be taken in greater detail. The Working Group shall also report periodically on its accomplishments and ongoing initiatives.

SEC. 3. *Outreach.* Consistent with the objectives of this memorandum and applicable law, the Working Group shall seek the views of representatives of private and nonprofit organizations; veterans and military service organizations; State, tribal, and local government agencies; elected officials; and other interested persons to inform the Working Group's plans.

SEC. 4. *General Provisions.* (a) The heads of agencies shall assist and provide information to the Working Group, consistent with applicable law, as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Working Group. Each agency and office shall bear its own expense for carrying out activities related to the Working Group.

(b) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the authority granted by law to an executive department or an agency, or the head thereof, or the status of that department or agency within the Federal Government.

(c) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(d) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(e) The Secretary of Homeland Security is hereby authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the Federal Register.

BARACK OBAMA.

§ 1781a. Department of Defense Military Family Readiness Council

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is in the Department of Defense the Department of Defense Military Family Readiness Council (in this section referred to as the “Council”).

(b) MEMBERS.—(1) The Council shall consist of the following members:

(A) The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, who shall serve as chair of the Council and who may designate a representative to chair the council in the Under Secretary's absence.

(B) The following persons, who shall be appointed or designated by the Secretary of Defense:

(i) One representative of each of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force, each of whom shall be a member or civilian employee of the armed force to be represented.

(ii) One representative, who shall be a member or civilian employee of the National Guard Bureau, to represent both the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard.

(iii) One spouse or parent of a member of each of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force, two of whom shall be the spouse or parent of an active component member, two of whom shall be the spouse or parent of a reserve component member, and one of whom shall be the spouse or parent of a member of the Space Force.

(C) Three individuals appointed by the Secretary of Defense from among representatives of military family organizations, including military family organizations of families of members of the regular components and of families of members of the reserve components.

(D) The senior enlisted advisor from each of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force, except that two of these members may instead be selected from among the spouses of the senior enlisted advisors.

(E) The Director of the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy.

(2)(A) The term on the Council of the members appointed or designated under subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) shall be two years and may be renewed by the Secretary of Defense.

(B) The term on the Council of the members appointed under subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1) shall be two years.

(c) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet not less often than twice each year.

(d) DUTIES.—The duties of the Council shall include the following:

(1) To review and make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense regarding the policy and plans required under section 1781b of this title.

(2) To monitor requirements for the support of military family readiness programs and activities of the Department of Defense.

(3) To evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the military family readiness programs and activities of the Department of Defense.

(4) To make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense to improve collaboration, awareness, and promotion of accurate and timely military family readiness information and support services by policy makers, service providers, and targeted beneficiaries.

(e) MILITARY FAMILY READINESS WORKING GROUP FOR MILITARY HOUSING.—