

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 733

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve mental health care for veterans through the establishment of a minimum requirement for the number of Vet Centers per State.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 1, 2023

Ms. SHERRILL (for herself, Mr. KEAN of New Jersey, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. TRONE, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. ROSS, Mr. VAN DREW, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. HOULAHAN, and Mr. CASTEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve mental health care for veterans through the establishment of a minimum requirement for the number of Vet Centers per State.

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 “Veterans Census-En-  
5 abled National Treatment Equitable Resource Supplement  
6 for Mental Health Act of 2023” or the “Vet CENTERS  
7 for Mental Health Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR NUMBER OF VET**  
2 **CENTERS PER STATE.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
4 shall ensure that, by not later than one year after the date  
5 of enactment of this Act, the number of covered Vet Cen-  
6 ters located in each State is at least the minimum required  
7 number described in subsection (b) with respect to that  
8 State.

9 (b) MINIMUM REQUIRED NUMBER.—The minimum  
10 required number described in this subsection is the fol-  
11 lowing:

12 (1) With respect to each State that is one of  
13 the several States not located in the contiguous  
14 United States, the District of Columbia, the Com-  
15 monwealth of Puerto Rico, or any other territory or  
16 possession of the United States that is not one of  
17 the several States, the greater of the following:

18 (A) One covered Vet Center per State.

19 (B) The total number of covered Vet Cen-  
20 ters that were located in the State on January  
21 1, 2020.

22 (2) With respect to each of the several States  
23 located in the contiguous United States and not re-  
24 ferred to in paragraph (1), the greater of the fol-  
25 lowing:

1 (A) One covered Vet Center per every  
2 30,000 square miles of land area in the State.

3 (B) One covered Vet Center per every  
4 55,000 veterans located in the State (calculated  
5 by using the number of veterans in the State as  
6 determined by the Director of the United States  
7 Census Bureau for the most recent census).

8 (c) ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL VET CEN-  
9 TERS.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out subsection  
11 (a), the Secretary shall establish such additional cov-  
12 ered Vet Centers in each State as may be necessary  
13 to meet the minimum required number described in  
14 subsection (b) with respect to the State.

15 (2) EXISTING FACILITIES.—In establishing ad-  
16 ditional covered Vet Centers pursuant to paragraph  
17 (1), the Secretary may establish such covered Vet  
18 Centers at facilities made available to the Secretary  
19 by the head of a State, local government, or feder-  
20 ally recognized Indian tribe to carry out this section,  
21 regardless of whether such facility is made available  
22 at a cost to the Secretary.

23 (3) VET CENTER OUTSTATIONS.—If the estab-  
24 lishment of more than one additional covered Vet  
25 Center in a State is necessary to meet the minimum

1 required number described in subsection (b) with re-  
2 spect to the State, the Secretary—

3 (A) shall establish at least one additional  
4 covered Vet Center to meet such number; and

5 (B) for each remaining covered Vet Center  
6 necessary to meet such number, may establish  
7 a covered Vet Center outstation in lieu of a cov-  
8 ered Vet Center.

9 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

10 (1) The term “covered Vet Center” means a  
11 Vet Center, as such term is defined in section 1712A  
12 of title 38, United States Code, that is scheduled to  
13 be open for the provision of services under such sec-  
14 tion for a minimum of eight hours per day during  
15 five days of the week, except that the Vet Center  
16 may be open for less than such minimum on a tem-  
17 porary basis as a result of a Federal holiday, weath-  
18 er concern, safety concern, pandemic, or for such  
19 other reasons as may be determined appropriate by  
20 the Secretary.

21 (2) The term “covered Vet Center outstation”  
22 means a Vet Center outstation that—

23 (A) provides similar child care services as  
24 the child care services provided at a Vet Center;  
25 and

1           (B) is scheduled to be open in accordance  
2           with the minimum hours and days specified in  
3           paragraph (1).

4           (3) The term “State” has the meaning given  
5           such term in section 101 of title 38, United States  
6           Code.

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