

Calendar No. 543

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3235

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a pilot program on posttraumatic growth, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 28, 2020

Ms. MCSALLY (for herself, Mr. KAINE, and Mrs. LOEFFLER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

Reported by Mr. MORAN, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a pilot program on posttraumatic growth, 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 “Veterans Posttrau-
5 matic Growth Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) There is a shortage of adequate, timely, and
4 effective mental health care available to veterans
5 across the United States.

6 (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs con-
7 tinues to highlight veterans mental health care and
8 suicide prevention as a key priority.

9 (3) There is an opportunity to explore effective
10 alternative treatments focused on the area of post-
11 traumatic growth.

12 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM ON POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH.**

13 (a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
14 shall conduct a pilot program to study the effectiveness
15 and benefits of nonprofit posttraumatic growth programs
16 to determine—

17 (1) the outcomes of such programs in contrast
18 to traditional models of mental health care;

19 (2) the possible integration of such nonprofit
20 programs into the mental health care programs pro-
21 vided by the Secretary; and

22 (3) the budgetary impacts of such integration.

23 (b) REVIEW AND EVALUATION.—In developing the
24 pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

1 (1) review relevant literature to summarize the
2 existing knowledge regarding posttraumatic growth
3 programs; and

4 (2) evaluate such programs.

5 (e) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the
6 pilot program under subsection (a) for a two-year period
7 beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of
8 the enactment of this Act.

9 (d) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall select more
10 than one location at which to carry out the pilot program
11 under subsection (a), of which at least one location shall
12 include a rural area.

13 (e) PARTICIPANTS.—

14 (1) ELIGIBILITY.—A veteran is eligible to par-
15 ticipate in the pilot program under subsection (a) if
16 the Secretary determines that the veteran is—

17 (A) not at known immediate risk of at-
18 tempting suicide; and

19 (B) not participating in traditional mental
20 health treatment.

21 (2) FEMALE VETERANS.—Not fewer than four
22 groups of veterans participating in the pilot program
23 under subsection (a) shall consist only of female vet-
24 erans.

1 (f) **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.**—The Secretary
2 shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) by
3 entering into an agreement with one or more nonprofit
4 organizations that—

5 (1) have staff with expertise in evidence-based
6 care and experience working with veterans;

7 (2) have experience in the science of posttrau-
8 matic growth; and

9 (3) use a standardized, evaluated, and compre-
10 hensive curriculum.

11 (g) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date
12 on which the pilot program under subsection (a) is com-
13 pleted, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report
14 on the pilot program, including a comparison of the care
15 provided under the pilot program and the clinical care
16 model of the Department.

17 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

18 *This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Posttraumatic*
19 *Growth Act”.*

20 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

21 *Congress finds the following:*

22 (1) *There is a shortage of adequate, timely, and*
23 *effective mental health care available to veterans*
24 *across the United States.*

1 (2) *The Department of Veterans Affairs con-*
2 *tinues to highlight veterans mental health care and*
3 *suicide prevention as a key priority.*

4 (3) *There is an opportunity to explore effective*
5 *alternative treatments focused on the area of*
6 *posttraumatic growth.*

7 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM ON POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH.**

8 (a) *PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs*
9 *shall conduct a pilot program, through the Office of Whole*
10 *Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to study the*
11 *effectiveness and benefits of nonprofit posttraumatic growth*
12 *programs to determine—*

13 (1) *the outcomes of such programs in contrast to*
14 *traditional models of mental health care;*

15 (2) *the possible integration of such nonprofit*
16 *programs into the mental health care programs pro-*
17 *vided by the Secretary; and*

18 (3) *the budgetary impacts of such integration.*

19 (b) *REVIEW AND EVALUATION.—In developing the*
20 *pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—*

21 (1) *review relevant literature to summarize the*
22 *existing knowledge regarding posttraumatic growth*
23 *programs; and*

24 (2) *evaluate such programs.*

1 (c) *DURATION.*—*The Secretary shall carry out the*
2 *pilot program under subsection (a) for a two-year period*
3 *beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of*
4 *the enactment of this Act.*

5 (d) *LOCATIONS.*—*The Secretary shall select more than*
6 *one location at which to carry out the pilot program under*
7 *subsection (a), of which at least one location shall include*
8 *a rural area.*

9 (e) *PARTICIPANTS.*—

10 (1) *ELIGIBILITY.*—*A veteran is eligible to par-*
11 *ticipate in the pilot program under subsection (a) if*
12 *the Secretary determines that the veteran is—*

13 (A) *not at known immediate risk of at-*
14 *tempting suicide; and*

15 (B) *not participating in traditional mental*
16 *health treatment.*

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18 *groups of veterans participating in the pilot program*
19 *under subsection (a) shall consist only of female vet-*
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22 *carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) by enter-*
23 *ing into an agreement with one or more nonprofit organiza-*
24 *tions that—*

1 (1) *have staff with expertise in evidence-based*
2 *care and experience working with veterans;*

3 (2) *have experience in the science of*
4 *posttraumatic growth; and*

5 (3) *use a standardized, evaluated, and com-*
6 *prehensive curriculum.*

7 (g) *REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date*
8 *on which the pilot program under subsection (a) is com-*
9 *pleted, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on*
10 *the pilot program, including a comparison of the care pro-*
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12 *of the Department.*

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