

115TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION H.R. 1712

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program to improve the monitoring of mental health and substance abuse treatment programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 23, 2017

Mrs. Roby (for herself, Ms. Titus, Mr. Walz, and Mr. Zeldin) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program to improve the monitoring of mental health and substance abuse treatment programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

- 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 "Protection and Advo-
- 5 cacy for Veterans Act".

1	SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE
2	MONITORING OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUB-
3	STANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAMS OF
4	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.
5	(a) Establishment.—The Secretary of Veterans
6	Affairs shall establish a grant program to improve the
7	monitoring of mental health and substance abuse treat-
8	ment programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
9	(b) Grants.—
10	(1) Main grant.—
11	(A) AWARD.—In carrying out subsection
12	(a), the Secretary shall award a grant to four
13	protection and advocacy systems under which
14	each protection and advocacy system shall carry
15	out a demonstration project to investigate and
16	monitor the care and treatment of veterans pro-
17	vided pursuant to chapter 17 of title 38, United
18	States Code, for mental illness or substance
19	abuse issues at medical facilities of the Depart-
20	ment.
21	(B) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—Each grant
22	awarded under subparagraph (A) to a protec-
23	tion and advocacy system shall be an amount
24	that is not less than \$105,000 during each year
25	that the protection and advocacy system carries

1	out a demonstration project described in such
2	subparagraph under the grant program.
3	(2) Collaboration grant.—
4	(A) AWARD.—During each year in which a
5	protection and advocacy system carries out a
6	demonstration project under subparagraph (A)
7	of such paragraph, the Secretary shall award a
8	joint grant to a national organization with ex-
9	tensive knowledge of the protection and advo-
10	cacy system and a veterans service organization
11	in the amount of \$80,000.
12	(B) Collaboration.—Each national or-
13	ganization and veterans service organization
14	that is awarded a joint grant under subpara-
15	graph (A) shall use the grant to facilitate the
16	collaboration between the national organization
17	and the veterans service organization to—
18	(i) coordinate training and technical
19	assistance for the protection and advocacy
20	systems; and
21	(ii) provide for data collection, report-
22	ing, and analysis in carrying out para-
23	graph (1)(A).
24	(3) Authority.—In carrying out a demonstra-
25	tion project under paragraph (1)(A), a protection

1	and advocacy system shall have the authorities pro-
2	vided by section 105(a) of the Protection and Advo-
3	cacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act (42
4	U.S.C. 10805(a)) with respect to a medical facility
5	of the Department.
6	(e) Selection.—In selecting the four protection and
7	advocacy system to receive grants under subsection
8	(b)(1)(A), the Secretary shall consider the following cri-
9	teria:
10	(1) Whether the protection and advocacy sys-
11	tem has demonstrated monitoring and investigation
12	experience, along with knowledge of the issues facing
13	veterans with disabilities.
14	(2) Whether the State in which the protection
15	and advocacy system operates—
16	(A) has low aggregated scores in the do-
17	mains of mental health, performance, and ac-
18	cess as rated by the Strategic Analytics Im-
19	provement and Learning database system (com-
20	monly referred to as "SAIL"); and
21	(B) to the extent practicable, is representa-
22	tive of both urban and rural States.
23	(d) Reports.—The Secretary shall ensure that each
24	protection and advocacy system participating in the grant
25	program submits to the Secretary reports developed by the

- 1 protection and advocacy system relating to an investiga-
- 2 tion or monitoring conducted pursuant to subsection
- 3 (b)(1)(A). The Secretary shall designate an office of the
- 4 Department of Veterans Affairs to receive each such re-
- 5 port.
- 6 (e) Duration; Termination.—
- 7 (1) Duration.—The Secretary shall carry out
- 8 the grant program established under subsection (a)
- 9 for a period of five years.
- 10 (2) TERMINATION.—The Secretary may termi-
- 11 nate a demonstration project under subsection
- 12 (b)(1)(A) before the five-year period described in
- paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines there is
- good cause for such termination. If the Secretary
- carries out such a termination, the Secretary shall
- award grants under subsection (b) to a new protec-
- tion and advocacy system.
- 18 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
- 19 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
- 20 out the grant program under subsection (a) \$500,000 for
- 21 each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022.
- 22 (g) Definitions.—In this section:
- 23 (1) The term "protection and advocacy system"
- has the meaning given the term "eligible system" in
- section 102(2) of the Protection and Advocacy for

- Individuals with Mental Illness Act (42 U.S.C.
 10802(2)).
- 3 (2) The term "State" means each of the several 4 States, territories, and possessions of the United 5 States, the District of Columbia, and the Common-6 wealth of Puerto Rico.

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