

117TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION H.R. 6260

To direct the Secretary of Defense to establish a working group for the reform of the casualty assistance officer program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 14, 2021

Mr. Bacon introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense to establish a working group for the reform of the casualty assistance officer program, 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 "Casualty Assistance
- 5 Reform Act of 2021".
- 6 SEC. 2. CASUALTY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: REFORM; ES-
- 7 TABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP.
- 8 (a) Casualty Assistance Reform Working
- 9 Group.—

1	(1) Establishment.—Not later than 180 days
2	after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
3	retary of Defense shall establish a working group to
4	be known as the "Casualty Assistance Reform
5	Working Group" (in this section referred to as the
6	"Working Group").
7	(2) Duties.—The Working Group shall per-
8	form the following duties:
9	(A) Create standards and training for
10	CAOs across the military departments.
11	(B) Explore the possibility of establishing
12	a unique badge designation for—
13	(i) CAOs who have performed CAO
14	duty more than five times; or
15	(ii) professional CAOs.
16	(C) Examine the current workflow of cas-
17	ualty affairs support across the military depart-
18	ments, including administrative processes and
19	survivor engagements.
20	(D) Perform a gap analysis and solution
21	document that clearly identifies and prioritizes
22	critical changes to modernize and profes-
23	sionalize the casualty experience for survivors.
24	(E) Review the organization of the Office
25	of Casualty, Mortuary Affairs and Military Fu-

1	neral Honors to ensure it is positioned to co-
2	ordinate policy and assist in all matters under
3	its jurisdiction, across the Armed Forces, in-
4	cluding any potential intersections with the De-
5	fense Prisoner of War and Missing in Action
6	Accounting Agency.
7	(F) Explore the establishment of—
8	(i) an annual meeting, led by the Sec-
9	retary of Defense, with gold star families
10	and
11	(ii) a surviving and gold star family
12	leadership council.
13	(G) Recommend improvements to the fam-
14	ily notification process of Arlington National
15	Cemetery.
16	(H) Explore the redesign of the Days
17	Ahead Binder, including creating an electronic
18	version.
19	(I) Consider the expansion of the DD
20	Form 93 to include more details regarding the
21	last wishes of the deceased member.
22	(J) Assess coordination between the De-
23	partment of Defense and the Office of Sur-
24	vivors Assistance of the Department of Vet-
25	erans Affairs.

1	(3) Membership.—The membership of the
2	Working Group shall be composed of the following:
3	(A) The Under Secretary of Defense for
4	Personnel and Readiness, who shall serve as
5	Chair of the Working Group.
6	(B) At least one person furnished with a
7	gold star lapel button under section 1126 of
8	title 10, United States Code, by each Secretary
9	of a military department.
10	(C) Other members of the Armed Forces
11	or civilian employees of the Department of De-
12	fense, appointed by the Secretary of Defense,
13	based on knowledge of, and experience with,
14	matters described in paragraph (2).
15	(4) Report.—Not later than September 30,
16	2022, the Working Group shall submit to the Sec-
17	retary of Defense a report containing the determina-
18	tions and recommendations of the Working Group.
19	(5) TERMINATION.—The Working Group shall
20	terminate upon submission of the report under para-
21	graph (4).
22	(b) Report Required.—Not later than November
23	1, 2022, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the
24	Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the
25	House of Representatives a report setting forth the results

- 1 of a review and assessment of the casualty assistance offi-
- 2 cer program, including the report of the Working Group.
- 3 (c) Establishment of Certain Definitions.—
- 4 Not later than one year after the date of the enactment
- 5 of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with
- 6 the Secretaries of the military departments, shall publish
- 7 an interim rule that establishes standard definitions, for
- 8 use across the military departments, of the terms "gold
- 9 star family" and "gold star survivor".
- 10 (d) CAO DEFINED.—In this section, the term
- 11 "CAO" means a casualty assistance officer of the Armed
- 12 Forces.

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