

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2399

To provide for greater transparency in the HUD–VASH supported housing program for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 30, 2019

Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. KATKO, Mr. LEVIN of California, Mr. HECK, Mr. CASE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. NORTON, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. ROUDA, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. CISNEROS, and Mr. CARBAJAL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To provide for greater transparency in the HUD–VASH supported housing program for homeless veterans, 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 “Homes for Our Heroes
5 Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Departments of Housing and Urban
2 Development (HUD) and Veterans Affairs (VA)
3 jointly support veterans experiencing homelessness
4 by providing permanent supportive housing.

5 (2) The HUD–VA Supportive Housing voucher
6 program (HUD–VASH) has successfully decreased
7 the number of homeless veterans.

8 (3) Since the establishment of the HUD–VASH
9 voucher program in 2008, more than 97,000 vouch-
10 ers have been awarded to public housing agencies
11 and more than 170,000 homeless veterans have been
12 provided with vouchers.

13 (4) The number of veterans experiencing home-
14 lessness has declined by over 30,000 since 2009, ac-
15 cording to data from the annual Point-in-Time
16 Homeless Count organized by HUD.

17 (5) Under the HUD–VASH program, veterans
18 benefit from affordable housing and matching sup-
19 portive services, such as mental health treatment,
20 substance use counseling, and employment training.

21 (6) In the past year, some regions of the Nation
22 have seen an increase in the numbers of veterans ex-
23 periencing homelessness, particularly in high-cost
24 housing markets where housing is becoming less af-
25 fordable.

1 (7) HUD and VA allocate vouchers under the
2 HUD–VASH program based on need, but do not
3 disclose the formula that determines the allocation
4 of vouchers.

5 **SEC. 3. REPORTS.**

6 (a) HUD.—

7 (1) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Paragraph (19) of sec-
8 tion 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937
9 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) is amended by adding at
10 the end the following new subparagraph:

11 “(D) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

12 “(i) INFORMATION REQUIRED.—Not
13 later than the expiration of the 12-month
14 period beginning on the date of the enact-
15 ment of this subparagraph and not less
16 often than annually thereafter, the Sec-
17 retary shall submit to the Congress, as
18 provided in clause (ii), and make publicly
19 available, information identifying for the
20 preceding year—

21 “(I) the public housing agencies,
22 in partnership with the medical cen-
23 ters of the Department of Veterans
24 Affairs, for which vouchers for rental

1 assistance under this paragraph were
2 allocated; and

3 “(II) the number of such vouch-
4 ers allocated, disaggregated by the
5 tenant-based vouchers and project-
6 based vouchers, as awarded by the
7 Department of Housing and Urban
8 Development.

9 “(ii) JOINT REPORT.—The informa-
10 tion required under clause (I) shall be sub-
11 mitted—

12 “(I) in a joint report by the Sec-
13 retary and the Secretary of Veterans
14 Affairs, together with the information
15 for such year required to be submitted
16 under section 2003(c) of title 38,
17 United States Code; and

18 “(II) to the Committees on Fi-
19 nancial Services and Veterans’ Affairs
20 of the House of Representatives and
21 the Committees on Banking, Housing,
22 and Urban Affairs and Veterans’ Af-
23 fairs of the Senate.”.

24 (2) REPORT ON HISTORICAL DATA.—

1 (A) INFORMATION REQUIRED.—Not later
2 than the expiration of the 90-day period begin-
3 ning on the date of the enactment of this Act,
4 the Secretary of Housing and Urban Develop-
5 ment shall submit to the Congress, as provided
6 in subparagraph (B), and make publicly avail-
7 able, for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2019
8 to the greatest extent possible the information
9 described in subclauses (I) and (II) of section
10 8(o)(19)(D)(i) of the United States Housing
11 Act of 1937, as added by the amendment made
12 by paragraph (1) of this subsection.

13 (B) JOINT REPORT.—The information re-
14 quired under subparagraph (A) shall be sub-
15 mitted—

16 (i) in a joint report by the Secretary
17 and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to-
18 gether with the information required to be
19 submitted under subsection (b)(2) of this
20 section; and

21 (ii) to the Committees on Financial
22 Services and Veterans' Affairs of the
23 House of Representatives and the Commit-
24 tees on Banking, Housing, and Urban Af-
25 fairs and Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

1 (b) VA.—

2 (1) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Section 2003 of title
3 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at
4 the end the following new subsection:

5 “(c) ANNUAL REPORTS ON CASE MANAGEMENT
6 FUNDING.—

7 “(1) INFORMATION REQUIRED.—Not later than
8 the expiration of the 6-month period beginning on
9 the date of the enactment of this subsection and not
10 less often than annually thereafter, the Secretary
11 shall submit to the Congress, as provided in para-
12 graph (2), and make publicly available, information
13 identifying for the preceding year—

14 “(A) the medical centers of the Depart-
15 ment of Veterans Affairs to which funds were
16 provided pursuant to subsection (b) of this sec-
17 tion for providing case managers under the sup-
18 ported housing program carried out by the Sec-
19 retary, in conjunction with the Department of
20 Housing and Urban Development, pursuant to
21 section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing
22 Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19));

23 “(B) the eligible entities with which the
24 Secretary of Veterans Affairs contracted to pro-
25 vide case management services under such sup-

ported housing program pursuant to section 304 of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (38 U.S.C. 2041 note);

“(C) for each such medical center and eligible entity, the number of full-time positions provided by such funding;

“(D) for caseworkers providing such case management services, the average number of veterans on the caseload for a caseworker;

“(E) the number of individuals who return to the supported housing program after leaving it;

“(F) the number of recipients of housing assistance vouchers under the supported housing program by gender; and

“(G) the number of such voucher recipients by service era.

“(2) JOINT REPORT.—The information required under paragraph (1) shall be submitted—

“(A) in a joint report by the Secretary and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, together with the information for such year required to be submitted under section

1 8(o)(19)(D) of the United States Housing Act
2 of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)(D)); and

3 “(B) to the Committees on Veterans’ Af-
4 fairs and Financial Services of the House of
5 Representatives and the Committees on Vet-
6 erans’ Affairs and Banking, Housing, and
7 Urban Affairs of the Senate”.

8 (2) REPORT ON HISTORICAL DATA.—

9 (A) INFORMATION REQUIRED.—Not later
10 than the expiration of the 6-month period be-
11 ginning on the date of the enactment of this
12 Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
13 submit to the Congress, as provided in subpara-
14 graph (B), and make publicly available, for
15 each of fiscal years 2014 through 2019 to the
16 greatest extent possible the information de-
17 scribed in subparagraphs (A) through (G) of
18 section 2003(c)(1) of title 38, United States
19 Code, as added by the amendment made by
20 paragraph (1) of this subsection.

21 (B) JOINT REPORT.—The information re-
22 quired under subparagraph (A) shall be sub-
23 mitted—

24 (i) in a joint report by the Secretary
25 and the Secretary of Housing and Urban

1 Development, together with the informa-
2 tion required to be submitted under sub-
3 section (a)(2) of this section; and

4 (ii) to the Committees on Financial
5 Services and Veterans' Affairs of the
6 House of Representatives and the Commit-
7 tees on Banking, Housing, and Urban Af-
8 fairs and Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

9 **SEC. 4. STUDY OF BARRIERS TO ADMINISTRATION IN HIGH**
10 **HOUSING COST AREAS.**

11 (a) STUDY.—The Secretaries of Housing and Urban
12 Development and Veterans Affairs, in consultation with
13 the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness,
14 shall jointly conduct a study to identify barriers to car-
15 rying out the HUD–VASH supported housing program
16 under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act
17 of 1937 in areas having high housing costs. Such study
18 shall—

19 (1) be carried out with respect to not less than
20 15 housing market areas used for purposes of fair
21 market rents established under the rental assistance
22 program under section 8 of the United States Hous-
23 ing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f), as selected by
24 such Secretaries, that—

1 (A) have high rates of veterans experi-
2 encing homelessness, as identified by the Sec-
3 retary of Housing and Urban Development;

4 (B) have high housing costs, as identified
5 by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-
6 opment;

7 (C) have at least one public housing agen-
8 cy and one medical center of the Department of
9 Veterans Affairs located within the area; and

10 (D) include housing market areas for
11 which fair market rents are calculated using the
12 Small Area Fair Market Rents and include
13 housing areas that are not calculated using
14 such rents;

15 (2) for each housing market area covered by the
16 study, collect data with respect to only one public
17 housing agency and one medical center of the De-
18 partment of Veterans Affairs located in the area;
19 and

20 (3) identify for such high housing cost areas—

21 (A) the average amount of time elapsed be-
22 tween a veteran receiving a voucher for rental
23 assistance under the program and signing a
24 lease for a residence to be assisted using such
25 voucher;

1 (B) administrative burdens to the use of
2 project-based voucher assistance under such
3 program, including any State and local regula-
4 tions that make project-based vouchers more
5 difficult to use;

6 (C) ways in which public housing agencies
7 leverage private resources with public funds
8 under such program and difficulties developers
9 may experience under such program in the use
10 of project-based vouchers;

11 (D) how public housing agencies and med-
12 ical centers of the Department of Veterans Af-
13 fairs define the term “unused vouchers”;

14 (E) the process for reallocation of any such
15 unused vouchers; and

16 (F) any best practices for administration
17 of vouchers under the program in such high
18 housing cost areas.

19 (b) REPORT.—Not later than the expiration of the
20 12-month period beginning on the date of the enactment
21 of this Act, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Develop-
22 ment and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly
23 submit to the Congress a report setting forth the findings
24 of the study under subsection (a) and any recommenda-
25 tions resulting from such study.

1 **SEC. 5. APPEARANCES BEFORE CONGRESS.**

2 Not later than the expiration of the 90-day period
3 beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the
4 Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the
5 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall each appear before the
6 Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
7 resentatives and the Senate to provide information regard-
8 ing—

9 (1) the formula used to allocate vouchers for
10 rental assistance under the HUD–VASH supported
11 housing program under section 8(o)(19) of the
12 United States Housing Act of 1937 among medical
13 centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

14 (2) how such Secretaries use existing data, in-
15 cluding requests from medical facilities of the De-
16 partment of Veterans Affairs and partnering public
17 housing agencies and voucher utilization rates, to
18 make allocation determinations; and

19 (3) which functions and calculations are made
20 by the Department of Veterans Affairs and which
21 are made by Department of Housing and Urban De-
22 velopment, in making such allocations.

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