

Calendar No. 413

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 850

To extend the authorization of appropriations to the Department of Veterans Affairs for purposes of awarding grants to veterans service organizations for the transportation of highly rural veterans.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 14, 2019

Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. SINEMA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

FEBRUARY 5, 2020

Reported by Mr. MORAN, with an amendment

[Insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To extend the authorization of appropriations to the Department of Veterans Affairs for purposes of awarding grants to veterans service organizations for the transportation of highly rural veterans.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Highly Rural Veteran
3 Transportation Program Extension Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS TO**
5 **VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS FOR**
6 **TRANSPORTATION OF HIGHLY RURAL VET-**
7 **ERANS.**

8 Section 307(d) of the Caregivers and Veterans Omni-
9 bus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–163;
10 38 U.S.C. 1710 note) is amended by striking “2020” and
11 inserting “2021”.

12 **SEC. 3. MAKING PERMANENT AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY**
13 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO TRANSPORT INDIV-**
14 **IDUALS TO AND FROM FACILITIES OF DE-**
15 **PARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

16 *Section 111A(a) of title 38, United States Code, is*
17 *amended—*

18 *(1) by striking paragraph (2); and*

19 *(2) in paragraph (1), by striking “(1)”.*

20 **SEC. 4. MEDICAL EXAMINATION PROTOCOL FOR VOLUN-**
21 **TEER DRIVERS PARTICIPATING IN PROGRAM**
22 **OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR VET-**
23 **ERANS.**

24 *Section 111A(b) of title 38, United States Code, is*
25 *amended—*

1 (1) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

2 and

3 (2) by adding at the end the following new para-

4 graph:

5 “(2)(A) Not later than 90 days after the date of the
6 enactment of the Highly Rural Veteran Transportation
7 Program Extension Act, the Secretary shall develop and es-
8 tablish a national protocol for the administration of med-
9 ical examinations for volunteer drivers to participate in the
10 program described in paragraph (1).

11 “(B) In developing the protocol required by subpara-
12 graph (A), the Secretary shall consult with such persons as
13 the Secretary determines have an interest in the program
14 described in paragraph (1).

15 “(C)(i) The Secretary shall implement the protocol by
16 first conducting a one-year pilot program using the pro-
17 tocol.

18 “(ii) After conducting the pilot program required by
19 clause (i), the Secretary shall assess the pilot program and
20 make such changes to the protocol as the Secretary considers
21 appropriate.

22 “(iii) After making changes to the protocol under
23 clause (ii), the Secretary shall implement the protocol in
24 phases during the course of one year.”.

1 **SEC. 5. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES**
2 **REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**
3 **FOR VETERANS.**

4 (a) *REPORT REQUIRED.*—Not later than one year
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller
6 General of the United States shall submit to the Committee
7 on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on
8 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report
9 on the program the establishment of which was facilitated
10 under section 111A(b) of title 38, United States Code.

11 (b) *CONTENTS.*—The report submitted under sub-
12 section (a) shall include the following:

13 (1) *A description of the program described in*
14 *subsection (a), including descriptions of the following:*

15 (A) *The purpose of the program.*

16 (B) *The activities carried out under the*
17 *program.*

18 (2) *An assessment of the sufficiency of the pro-*
19 *gram with respect to the purpose of the program.*

20 (3) *An assessment of the cost effectiveness of the*
21 *program in relation to alternatives.*

22 (4) *An assessment of the health benefits for vet-*
23 *erans who have participated in the program.*

24 (5) *An assessment of the sufficiency of staffing of*
25 *employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs who*

1 *are responsible for facilitating the maintenance of the*
2 *program.*

3 *(6) An assessment, with respect to the purpose of*
4 *the program, of the number of vehicles owned by and*
5 *operating in conjunction with the program.*

6 *(7) An assessment of the awareness and usage of*
7 *the program by veterans and their families.*

8 *(8) An assessment of other options for transpor-*
9 *tation under the program, such as local taxi compa-*
10 *nies and ridesharing programs such as Uber and*
11 *Lyft.*

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