

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2878

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a Native VetSuccess at Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 28, 2021

Mr. GALLEGO (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. O'HALLERAN, and Mr. COLE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a Native VetSuccess at Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program.

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 “Native VetSuccess at
5 Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. NATIVE VETSUCCESS AT TRIBAL COLLEGES AND**
7 **UNIVERSITIES PILOT PROGRAM.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after
9 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of

1 Veterans Affairs shall carry out a five-year pilot program,
2 to be known as the “Native VetSuccess at Tribal Colleges
3 and Universities Pilot Program”. Under such pilot pro-
4 gram the Secretary shall—

5 (1) identify three regional Native VetSuccess
6 service areas consisting of at least two participating
7 Tribal colleges or universities;

8 (2) assign to each regional Native VetSuccess
9 service area a VetSuccess on Campus counselor and
10 a full-time Vet Center outreach coordinator, both of
11 whom shall be based on one or more of the partici-
12 pating Tribal colleges or universities in the service
13 area; and

14 (3) provide for eligible students at such partici-
15 pating colleges and universities with all services for
16 which such students would be eligible under the
17 VetSuccess on Campus program of the Department
18 of Veterans Affairs.

19 (b) ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.—For purposes of the pilot
20 program, an eligible student is a student who is a veteran,
21 member of the Armed Forces, or dependent of a veteran
22 or member of the Armed Forces who is eligible for any
23 service or benefit under the VetSuccess on Campus pro-
24 gram of the Department.

1 (c) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—In developing
2 the pilot program under this section, the Secretary, acting
3 through the Veteran Readiness and Employment Program
4 of the Department of Veterans Affairs and in coordination
5 with the Office of Tribal Government Relations of the De-
6 partment, shall consult with Indian tribes, Tribal organi-
7 zations, and veterans service organizations regarding each
8 of the following:

9 (1) The design of the pilot program.

10 (2) The selection of the three regional Native
11 VetSuccess service areas and participating Tribal
12 colleges and universities, taking into consideration—

13 (A) the number of eligible students en-
14 rolled in the college or university and in the re-
15 gional service area;

16 (B) the capacity of the colleges and univer-
17 sities in the regional service area to accommo-
18 date a full-time VetSuccess on Campus coun-
19 selor and a full-time Vet Center outreach coor-
20 dinator;

21 (C) the lack of information available at the
22 colleges and universities in the regional service
23 area about and lack of access to benefits and
24 services under the laws administered by the
25 Secretary; and

1 (D) any other factor that the Secretary or
2 the Indian tribes, Tribal organizations, and vet-
3 erans service organizations identify as relevant.

4 (3) The most effective way to provide culturally
5 competent outreach and services to eligible students
6 at Tribal colleges and universities.

7 (d) OUTREACH TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.—
8 The Secretary shall provide notice of the pilot program
9 to all Tribal colleges and universities and encourage all
10 Tribal colleges and universities to coordinate with each
11 other to create regional service areas to participate in the
12 pilot program.

13 (e) BRIEFINGS AND REPORTS.—

14 (1) IMPLEMENTATION BRIEFING.—Not later
15 than one year after the date of the enactment of this
16 Act, the Secretary shall provide for the Committee
17 on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Natural
18 Resources of the House of Representatives and the
19 Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee
20 on Indian Affairs of the Senate a briefing on—

21 (A) the design, structure, and objectives of
22 the pilot program; and

23 (B) the three regional Native Vet Success
24 service areas and the Tribal colleges and uni-
25 versities selected for participation in the pilot

1 program and the reason for the selection of
2 such service areas and such colleges and univer-
3 sities.

4 (2) REPORT.—Not later than four years after
5 the date on which the Secretary establishes the pilot
6 program, the Secretary shall submit to such Com-
7 mittees a report on the pilot program. Such report
8 shall include each of the following:

9 (A) The number of eligible students pro-
10 vided services through the pilot program.

11 (B) The types of services that eligible stu-
12 dents received through the pilot program.

13 (C) The graduation rate of eligible stu-
14 dents who received services through the pilot
15 program.

16 (D) The rate of employment within one
17 year of graduation for eligible students who re-
18 ceived services through the pilot program.

19 (E) Feedback from each Tribal college or
20 university that participated in the pilot pro-
21 gram, including on the regional nature of the
22 program.

23 (F) Analysis of the feasibility of expanding
24 a regionally based Native VetSuccess at Tribal
25 Colleges and Universities Program, including an

1 explanation of the challenges of such a model
2 due to issues with distance, communication, and
3 coordination, and to the level of unmet services.

4 (G) A detailed legislative proposal regard-
5 ing a long-term extension of the pilot program,
6 including a budget, if the Secretary determines
7 that such an extension is appropriate.

8 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) The term “Tribal college or university” has
10 the meaning given such term under section 316 of
11 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
12 1059c).

13 (2) The term “tribal organization” has the
14 meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian
15 Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act
16 (25 U.S.C. 450b).

17 (3) The term “culturally competent” means
18 considerate of the unique values, customs, traditions,
19 cultures, and languages of Native American vet-
20 erans.

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