

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4182

To improve the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs to prevent suicide by women veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 9, 2019

Ms. WATERS (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. NORTON, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. CUELLAR, and Ms. GABBARD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To improve the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs to prevent suicide by women 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 “Women Veterans Sup-
5 port Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. STUDY ON SUICIDE BY WOMEN VETERANS.**

7 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
8 enter into an agreement with an independent entity to
9 conduct a study on suicide by women veterans.

1 (b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The study conducted
2 under subsection (a) shall—

3 (1) determine whether experiences with the
4 medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Af-
5 fairs vary by gender and, if so, the causes of such
6 variation; and

7 (2) include recommendations to—

8 (A) improve preventing women veterans
9 from attempting or committing suicide; and

10 (B) address any variations described in
11 paragraph (1).

12 (c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
13 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
14 to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
15 Representatives and the Senate, and make publicly avail-
16 able, a report on the results of the study conducted under
17 subsection (a), which shall include recommendations to
18 improve the care provided to women veterans by the De-
19 partment of Veterans Affairs.

20 **SEC. 3. OUTREACH BY CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS.**

21 (a) CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS.—Section 318
22 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at
23 the end the following new subsections:

1 “(g) OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.—(1) The Center shall
2 carry out outreach activities on a national scale under sub-
3 section (d) to prevent suicide by women veterans.

4 “(2) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop
5 metrics to track the effectiveness of the outreach activities
6 carried out pursuant to paragraph (1). Such metrics shall
7 include measures of both performance and effectiveness.

8 “(3)(A) Not later than October 1, 2020, and annually
9 thereafter through 2024, the Secretary shall submit to the
10 Committees on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committees on
11 Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Represent-
12 atives a report on the effectiveness of the outreach activi-
13 ties carried out pursuant to paragraph (1), including a
14 description of the metrics developed under paragraph (2).

15 “(B) The report submitted under subparagraph (A)
16 shall include the following:

17 “(i) An assessment of the effectiveness of the
18 outreach activities carried out pursuant to para-
19 graph (1).

20 “(ii) An explanation of why the metrics devel-
21 oped under paragraph (2) were chosen.

22 “(iii) An assessment of how accurately those
23 metrics will reflect the goals and objectives specified
24 in such paragraph.

1 “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
2 is authorized to be appropriated for the Center \$2,800,000
3 for fiscal year 2021. Of such amounts, not less than 50
4 percent shall be expended on outreach activities conducted
5 by the Center under subsection (g).”.

6 (b) OFFICE OF WOMEN’S HEALTH SERVICES.—

7 (1) OUTREACH.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
8 fairs, acting through the Office of Women’s Health
9 Services, shall carry out outreach activities on a
10 local and regional scale to prevent suicide by women
11 veterans.

12 (2) METRICS.—The Secretary shall develop
13 metrics to track the effectiveness of the outreach ac-
14 tivities carried out pursuant to paragraph (1). Such
15 metrics shall include measures of both performance
16 and effectiveness.

17 (3) REPORT.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than October
19 1, 2020, and annually thereafter through 2024,
20 the Secretary shall submit to the Committees
21 on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committees on
22 Appropriations of the Senate and the House of
23 Representatives a report on the effectiveness of
24 the outreach activities carried out pursuant to

paragraph (1), including a description of the metrics developed under paragraph (2).

(B) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The report submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

(i) An assessment of the effectiveness of the outreach activities carried out pursuant to paragraph (1).

(ii) An explanation of why the metrics developed under paragraph (2) were chosen.

(iii) An assessment of how accurately those metrics will reflect the goals and objectives specified in such paragraph.

(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the Office of Women's Health Services \$27,800,000 for fiscal year 2021. Of such amounts, not less than 50 percent shall be expended on outreach activities conducted by the Office under paragraph (1).

SEC. 4. GRANTS FOR WOMEN VETERANS.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—Commencing not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a grant

1 program to provide services described in subsection (f) to
2 women veterans.

3 (b) DURATION OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall
4 carry out the program during the five-year period begin-
5 ning on the date of the commencement of the program.

6 (c) GRANTS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
8 out the program through the award of grants to eli-
9 gible organizations for the provision of assistance de-
10 scribed in subsection (a).

11 (2) MATCHING FUNDS REQUIRED.—A grant
12 under this section shall be in an amount that does
13 not exceed 50 percent of the amount required by the
14 organization to provide the services described in sub-
15 section (f).

16 (d) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS.—For purposes of
17 this section, an eligible organization is any nonprofit orga-
18 nization that the Secretary determines, in consultation
19 with State entities that serve veterans, is suitable for re-
20 ceipt of a grant under the program.

21 (e) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—

22 (1) APPLICATIONS.—An organization seeking a
23 grant under the program shall submit to the Sec-
24 retary an application therefor at such time, in such
25 manner, and containing such information and assur-

1 ances as the Secretary, in consultation with State
2 entities that serve veterans, may require.

3 (2) PRIORITY FOR HUBS OF SERVICES.—In
4 awarding grants under the program, the Secretary
5 shall give priority to an organization that provides
6 multiple forms of services described in subsection
7 (f).

8 (f) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—Each organization re-
9 ceiving a grant under the program shall use the grant to
10 provide to services to women veterans, including with re-
11 spect to—

12 (1) health care services, including to obtain
13 health insurance coverage;

14 (2) mental health support services;

15 (3) daily living services;

16 (4) income support services;

17 (5) financial counseling services;

18 (6) legal assistance;

19 (7) education supportive services;

20 (8) career advancement services;

21 (9) transportation;

22 (10) childcare; and

23 (11) housing.

24 (g) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
2 after the date of the commencement of the program
3 and not less frequently than once each year there-
4 after until the termination of the program, the Sec-
5 retary shall submit to the appropriate committees of
6 Congress a report on the program carried out under
7 this section.

8 (2) CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under
9 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

10 (A) A list of the organizations that have
11 received grants under the program, including
12 the geographic location of the organization and
13 the types of services outlined in subsection (f)
14 that each organization provides.

15 (B) The number of veterans served by each
16 organization.

17 (C) An assessment of the effectiveness of
18 the services provided under the program.

19 (D) The amount of each grant awarded to
20 each organization under the program.

21 (E) Such other matters as the Secretary
22 considers appropriate.

23 (3) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
24 GRESS.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate
25 committees of Congress” means—

1 (A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
 2 and the Committee on Appropriations of the
 3 Senate; and

4 (B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
 5 and the Committee on Appropriations of the
 6 House of Representatives.

7 **SEC. 5. GRANTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING MENTAL**
 8 **HEALTH WELLNESS SERVICES TO VETERANS.**

9 (a) GRANTS.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 17
 11 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by add-
 12 ing at the end the following new section:

13 **“§ 1720J. Financial assistance for mental health sup-**
 14 **portive services for veterans seeking**
 15 **mental health treatment**

16 “(a) PLAN.—(1) The Secretary shall develop a plan
 17 to carry out the financial assistance described in sub-
 18 section (b).

19 “(2) Not later than one year after the date of the
 20 enactment of this section, the Secretary shall submit to
 21 the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Rep-
 22 resentatives and the Senate the plan developed under sub-
 23 section (a), including a description of any legislative ac-
 24 tions the Secretary determines necessary to carry out the
 25 plan.

1 “(b) DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

2 (1) Not later than 90 days after the date by which the
3 Secretary is required to submit the plan under subsection
4 (a)(2), the Secretary shall provide financial assistance to
5 eligible entities approved under this section to provide or
6 coordinate the provision of mental health supportive serv-
7 ices described in subsection (c) for a veteran with a mental
8 health condition who is seeking mental health treatment.

9 “(2) Financial assistance under paragraph (1) shall
10 consist of the award of a grant to an approved eligible
11 entity for each veteran described in paragraph (1) for
12 which the approved eligible entity is providing or coordi-
13 nating the provision of mental health supportive services.

14 “(3)(A) The Secretary shall award grants under this
15 section to each approved eligible entity that is providing
16 or coordinating the provision of mental health supportive
17 services under this section.

18 “(B) The Secretary may establish intervals of pay-
19 ment for the administration of grants under this section
20 and establish a maximum amount to be awarded, in ac-
21 cordance with the services being provided and the duration
22 of such services.

23 “(4) In providing financial assistance under para-
24 graph (1), the Secretary shall give preference to entities
25 providing or coordinating the provision of supportive men-

1 tal health services for veterans with mental health condi-
2 tions who face barriers in accessing mental health care
3 services from the Department.

4 “(5) The Secretary shall ensure that, to the extent
5 practicable, financial assistance under this subsection is
6 equitably distributed across geographic regions, including
7 rural communities and tribal lands.

8 “(6) Each entity receiving financial assistance under
9 this section to provide mental health supportive services
10 to a veteran with a mental health condition shall notify
11 that veteran that such services are being paid for, in whole
12 or in part, by the Department.

13 “(7) The Secretary shall require entities receiving fi-
14 nancial assistance under this section to submit a report
15 to the Secretary that describes the services provided or
16 coordinated with such financial assistance.

17 “(c) MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—
18 The mental health supportive services described in this
19 subsection are services provided by an eligible entity or
20 a subcontractor of an eligible entity that address the needs
21 of veterans with mental health conditions, including—

22 “(1) outreach services;

23 “(2) case management services;

24 “(3) assistance in obtaining any benefits from
25 the Department that the veteran may be eligible to

1 receive, including health care services, vocational and
2 rehabilitation counseling, employment and training
3 services, and educational assistance; and

4 “(4) assistance in obtaining and coordinating
5 the provision of other public benefits provided by
6 any Federal, State, or local agency, or any other eli-
7 gible entity, including—

8 “(A) health care services (including obtain-
9 ing health insurance);

10 “(B) daily living services;

11 “(C) personal financial planning services;

12 “(D) transportation services;

13 “(E) income support services;

14 “(F) fiduciary and representative payee
15 services;

16 “(G) legal services to assist the veteran
17 with issues that interfere with the ability of the
18 veteran to find and retain meaningful employ-
19 ment, housing, or benefits to which the veteran
20 may be entitled;

21 “(H) child care services;

22 “(I) housing counseling; and

23 “(J) other services necessary for maintain-
24 ing independent living.

1 “(d) APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

2 (1) An eligible entity seeking financial assistance under
3 subsection (b) shall submit to the Secretary an application
4 therefor in such form, in such manner, and containing
5 such commitments and information as the Secretary deter-
6 mines to be necessary to carry out this section.

7 “(2) Each application submitted by an eligible entity
8 under paragraph (1) shall contain—

9 “(A) a description of the mental health sup-
10 portive services described in subsection (c) proposed
11 to be provided by the eligible entity under this sec-
12 tion and the identified needs for those services;

13 “(B) a description of the demographic informa-
14 tion of the veterans proposed to be provided such
15 services;

16 “(C) an estimate of the number of veterans
17 with a mental health condition proposed to be pro-
18 vided such services;

19 “(D) evidence of the experience of the eligible
20 entity in providing mental health supportive services
21 to veterans with a mental health condition; and

22 “(E) a description of the managerial capacity of
23 the eligible entity—

24 “(i) to coordinate the provision of mental
25 health supportive services with the provision of

1 mental health services by the eligible entity or
2 another organization;

3 “(ii) to assess continually the needs of vet-
4 erans with a mental health condition for mental
5 health supportive services;

6 “(iii) to coordinate the provision of mental
7 health supportive services with the services of
8 the Department; and

9 “(iv) to tailor supportive mental health
10 services to the needs of veterans with a mental
11 health condition.

12 “(3)(A) The Secretary shall establish criteria for the
13 selection of eligible entities to be provided financial assist-
14 ance under this section.

15 “(B) Criteria established under subparagraph (A)
16 with respect to an eligible entity shall include the fol-
17 lowing:

18 “(i) Relevant accreditation as may be required
19 by each State in which the eligible entity operates.

20 “(ii) Experience coordinating care or providing
21 treatment for veterans or members of the Armed
22 Forces.

23 “(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—(1) The Secretary
24 shall provide training and technical assistance to eligible
25 entities provided financial assistance under this section re-

1 garding the planning, development, and provision of men-
2 tal health supportive services under this section.

3 “(2) The Secretary may provide the training de-
4 scribed in paragraph (1) directly or through grants or con-
5 tracts with appropriate public or nonprofit private entities,
6 including through grants awarded under section 2064 of
7 this title.

8 “(f) COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.—To the extent
9 practicable, the Secretary may collect information from an
10 eligibility entity awarded a grant under this section relat-
11 ing to a mental health condition of a veteran for inclusion
12 in the electronic health record of the Department for such
13 veteran for the sole purpose of improving care provided
14 to such veteran.

15 “(g) FUNDING.—From amounts appropriated to the
16 Department for medical services, there shall be available
17 to carry out subsections (b), (c), and (d) the following:

18 “(1) \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2022.

19 “(2) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2023.

20 “(3) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2024.

21 “(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 “(1) The term ‘eligible entity’ means any of the
23 following:

24 “(A) An incorporated private institution or
25 foundation—

1 “(i) no part of the net earnings of
2 which inures to the benefit of any member,
3 founder, contributor, or individual;

4 “(ii) that has a governing board that
5 is responsible for the operation of the men-
6 tal health supportive services provided
7 under this section; and

8 “(iii) that is approved by the Sec-
9 retary with respect to financial responsi-
10 bility.

11 “(B) A for-profit limited partnership, the
12 sole general partner of which is an organization
13 meeting the requirements of clauses (i), (ii),
14 and (iii) of subparagraph (A).

15 “(C) A corporation wholly owned and con-
16 trolled by an organization meeting the require-
17 ments of clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of subpara-
18 graph (A).

19 “(D) A tribally designated housing entity
20 (as defined in section 4 of the Native American
21 Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act
22 of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103)).

23 “(2) The term ‘veteran with a mental health
24 condition’ means a veteran who has been diagnosed
25 with, or who is seeking treatment for, one or more

1 mental health conditions, as determined by the Sec-
2 retary.”.

3 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
4 tions at the beginning of chapter 17 is amended by
5 inserting after the item relating to section 1720I the
6 following new item:

 “1720J. Financial assistance for mental health supportive services for veterans
 seeking mental health treatment.”.

7 (b) STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
9 Affairs shall conduct a study on the effectiveness of
10 the program of financial assistance under section
11 1720J of title 38, United States Code, as added by
12 subsection (a), in meeting the needs of veterans with
13 a mental health condition, as that term is defined in
14 that section.

15 (2) COMPARISON.—In conducting the study re-
16 quired by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall com-
17 pare the results of the program described in that
18 paragraph with other programs of the Department
19 of Veterans Affairs dedicated to the delivery of men-
20 tal health services to veterans.

21 (3) CRITERIA.—In making the comparison re-
22 quired by paragraph (2), the Secretary shall examine
23 the following:

1 (A) The satisfaction of veterans targeted
2 by the programs described in paragraph (2).

3 (B) The health status of such veterans.

4 (C) The mental wellness of such veterans.

5 (D) The degree to which such veterans are
6 encouraged to engage in productive activity by
7 such programs.

8 (E) The number of veterans using such
9 programs, disaggregated by—

10 (i) veterans who have received care
11 from the Department in the previous two
12 years; and

13 (ii) veterans who have not received
14 care from the Department in the previous
15 two years.

16 (F) The number of women's clinics that
17 have peer support specialists who are women,
18 including—

19 (i) the location of such clinics;

20 (ii) the availability of peer support
21 specialist services at such clinics;

22 (iii) the average number of veterans
23 treated by such specialists; and

1 (iv) the average duration of the rela-
2 tionship between a veteran and such spe-
3 cialists.

4 (G) The number of veterans who die by
5 suicide while receiving services from an entity
6 in receipt of a grant under the program of fi-
7 nancial assistance under section 1720J of title
8 38, United States Code, as added by subsection
9 (a), or who die by suicide during the 180-day
10 period after receiving such services.

11 (4) REPORT.—Not later than December 31,
12 2021, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall
13 submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
14 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of
15 the House of Representatives a report on the results
16 of the study required by paragraph (1).

17 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Secretary shall begin
18 providing financial assistance under section 1720J of title
19 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), not
20 later than one year after the date of the enactment of this
21 Act.

1 **SEC. 6. ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
2 **AFFAIRS READJUSTMENT COUNSELING**
3 **SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 76 of title 38, United
5 States Code, is amended by inserting after subchapter
6 VIII the following new subchapter:

7 “SUBCHAPTER IX—READJUSTMENT
8 COUNSELING SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
9 “§ 7698. Requirement for program

10 “As part of the Educational Assistance Program, the
11 Secretary shall carry out a scholarship program under this
12 subchapter. The program shall be known as the Depart-
13 ment of Veterans Affairs Readjustment Counseling Serv-
14 ice Scholarship Program (in this subchapter referred to
15 as the ‘Program’).

16 “§ 7699. Eligibility; agreement

17 “(a) IN GENERAL.—An individual is eligible to par-
18 ticipate in the Program, as determined by the Readjust-
19 ment Counseling Service of the Department, if the indi-
20 vidual—

21 “(1) is accepted for enrollment or enrolled (as
22 described in section 7602 of this title) in, a program
23 of study at an accredited educational institution,
24 school, or training program leading to—

1 “(A) a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral de-
2 gree in psychology, social work, or marriage
3 and family therapy; or

4 “(B) a master’s degree in mental health
5 counseling; and

6 “(2) enters into an agreement with the Sec-
7 retary under subsection (c).

8 “(b) PRIORITY.—In selecting individuals to partici-
9 pate in the Program, the Secretary shall give priority to
10 the following individuals:

11 “(1) An individual who agrees to be employed
12 by a Vet Center located in a community that is—

13 “(A) designated as a medically underserved
14 population under section 330(b)(3) of the Pub-
15 lic Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(b)(3));
16 and

17 “(B) in a state with a per capita popu-
18 lation of veterans of more than five percent ac-
19 cording to the National Center for Veterans
20 Analysis and Statistics and the Bureau of the
21 Census.

22 “(2) An individual who is a veteran.

23 “(c) AGREEMENT.—An agreement between the Sec-
24 retary and a participant in the Program shall (in addition

1 to the requirements set forth in section 7604 of this title)
2 include the following:

3 “(1) An agreement by the Secretary to provide
4 the participant with a scholarship under the Pro-
5 gram for a specified number of school years during
6 which the participant pursues a program of study
7 described in subsection (a)(1) that meets the re-
8 quirements set forth in section 7602(a) of this title.

9 “(2) An agreement by the participant to serve
10 as a full-time employee of the Department at a Vet
11 Center for a three-year period during the six-year
12 period following the completion by the participant of
13 such program of study (in this subchapter referred
14 to as the ‘period of obligated service’).

15 “(d) VET CENTER DEFINED.—In this section, the
16 term ‘Vet Center’ has the meaning given that term in sec-
17 tion 1712A(h) of this title.

18 **“§ 7699A. Obligated service**

19 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Each participant in the Program
20 shall provide service as a full-time employee of the Depart-
21 ment at a Vet Center (as defined in section 7699(c) of
22 this title) for the period of obligated service set forth in
23 the agreement of the participant entered into under sec-
24 tion 7604 of this title.

1 “(b) DETERMINATION OF SERVICE COMMENCEMENT

2 DATE.—(1) Not later than 60 days before the service com-
3 mencement date of a participant, the Secretary shall no-
4 tify the participant of that service commencement date.

5 “(2) The date specified in paragraph (1) with respect
6 to a participant is the date for the beginning of the period
7 of obligated service of the participant.

8 **“§ 7699B. Breach of agreement: liability**

9 “(a) LIQUIDATED DAMAGES.—(1) A participant in
10 the Program (other than a participant described in sub-
11 section (b)) who fails to accept payment, or instructs the
12 educational institution in which the participant is enrolled
13 not to accept payment, in whole or in part, of a scholarship
14 under the agreement entered into under section 7604 of
15 this title shall be liable to the United States for liquidated
16 damages in the amount of \$1,500.

17 “(2) Liability under paragraph (1) is in addition to
18 any period of obligated service or other obligation or liabil-
19 ity under such agreement.

20 “(b) LIABILITY DURING PROGRAM OF STUDY.—(1)
21 Except as provided in subsection (d), a participant in the
22 Program shall be liable to the United States for the
23 amount which has been paid to or on behalf of the partici-
24 pant under the agreement if any of the following occurs:

1 “(A) The participant fails to maintain an ac-
 2 ceptable level of academic standing in the edu-
 3 cational institution in which the participant is en-
 4 rolled (as determined by the educational institution
 5 under regulations prescribed by the Secretary).

6 “(B) The participant is dismissed from such
 7 educational institution for disciplinary reasons.

8 “(C) The participant voluntarily terminates the
 9 program of study in such educational institution be-
 10 fore the completion of such program of study.

11 “(2) Liability under this subsection is in lieu of any
 12 service obligation arising under the agreement.

13 “(c) LIABILITY DURING PERIOD OF OBLIGATED
 14 SERVICE.—(1) Except as provided in subsection (d), if a
 15 participant in the Program does not complete the period
 16 of obligated service of the participant, the United States
 17 shall be entitled to recover from the participant an amount
 18 determined in accordance with the following formula: A
 19 $= 3\Phi(t - s/t)$.

20 “(2) In the formula in paragraph (1):

21 “(A) ‘ A ’ is the amount the United States is en-
 22 titled to recover.

23 “(B) ‘ Φ ’ is the sum of—

24 “(i) the amounts paid under this sub-
 25 chapter to or on behalf of the participant; and

1 “(ii) the interest on such amounts which
 2 would be payable if at the time the amounts
 3 were paid they were loans bearing interest at
 4 the maximum legal prevailing rate, as deter-
 5 mined by the Treasurer of the United States.

6 “(C) ‘t’ is the total number of months in the
 7 period of obligated service of the participant.

8 “(D) ‘s’ is the number of months of such period
 9 served by the participant.

10 “(d) LIMITATION ON LIABILITY FOR REDUCTIONS-
 11 IN-FORCE.—Liability shall not arise under subsection (c)
 12 if the participant fails to maintain employment as a De-
 13 partment employee due to a staffing adjustment.

14 “(e) PERIOD FOR PAYMENT OF DAMAGES.—Any
 15 amount of damages that the United States is entitled to
 16 recover under this section shall be paid to the United
 17 States within the one-year period beginning on the date
 18 of the breach of the agreement.”.

19 (b) CONFORMING AND TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—

20 (1) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

21 (A) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—Sec-
 22 tion 7601(a) of such title is amended—

23 (i) in paragraph (5), by striking
 24 “and”;

1 (ii) in paragraph (6), by striking the
2 period and inserting “; and”; and

3 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
4 lowing new paragraph:

5 “(7) the readjustment counseling service schol-
6 arship program provided for in subchapter IX of this
7 chapter.”.

8 (B) ELIGIBILITY.—Section 7602 of such
9 title is amended—

10 (i) in subsection (a)(1)—

11 (I) by striking “or VI” and in-
12 serting “VI, or IX”; and

13 (II) by striking “subchapter VI”
14 and inserting “subchapter VI or IX”;
15 and

16 (ii) in subsection (b), by striking “or
17 VI” and inserting “VI, or IX”.

18 (C) APPLICATION.—Section 7603(a)(1) of
19 such title is amended by striking “or VIII” and
20 inserting “VIII, or IX”.

21 (D) TERMS OF AGREEMENT.—Section
22 7604 of such title is amended by striking “or
23 VIII” each place it appears and inserting
24 “VIII, or IX”.

1 (E) ANNUAL REPORT.—Section 7632 of
 2 such title is amended—

3 (i) in paragraph (1), by striking “and
 4 the Specialty Education Loan Repayment
 5 Program” and inserting “the Specialty
 6 Education Loan Repayment Program, and
 7 the Readjustment Counseling Service
 8 Scholarship Program”; and

9 (ii) in paragraph (4), by striking “and
 10 per participant in the Specialty Education
 11 Loan Repayment Program” and inserting
 12 “per participant in the Specialty Education
 13 Loan Repayment Program, and per partic-
 14 ipant in the Readjustment Counseling
 15 Service Scholarship Program”.

16 (2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections
 17 at the beginning of chapter 76 of such title is
 18 amended by inserting after the items relating to sub-
 19 chapter VIII the following:

“SUBCHAPTER IX—READJUSTMENT COUNSELING SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP
 PROGRAM

“Sec.

“7698. Requirement for program.

“7699. Eligibility; agreement.

“7699A. Obligated service.

“7699B. Breach of agreement: liability.”.

20 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Secretary of Veterans
 21 Affairs shall begin awarding scholarships under sub-
 22 chapter IX of chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code,

1 as added by subsection (a), for programs of study begin-
2 ning not later than one year after the date of the enact-
3 ment of this Act.

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