

Suspend the Rules And Pass the Bill, H.R. 5059, with Amendments

(The amendments strike all after the enacting clause and insert a new text and a new title)

113TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 5059

To direct the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, to review the terms or characterization of the discharge or separation of certain individuals from the Armed Forces, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 10, 2014

Mr. WALZ (for himself, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BARBER, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. FATAH, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. STIVERS, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mr. ROONEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, 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 direct the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Defense and the Depart-

ment of Veterans Affairs, to review the terms or characterization of the discharge or separation of certain individuals from the Armed Forces, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 “Clay Hunt Suicide Pre-
5 vention for American Veterans Act” or the “Clay Hunt
6 SAV Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. EVALUATIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND SUI-**
8 **CIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS OF DEPART-**
9 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

10 (a) EVALUATIONS.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than
12 once each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
13 shall provide for the conduct of an evaluation of the
14 mental health care and suicide prevention programs
15 carried out under the laws administered by the Sec-
16 retary.

17 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each evaluation conducted
18 under paragraph (1) shall—

1 (A) use metrics that are common among
2 and useful for practitioners in the field of men-
3 tal health care and suicide prevention;

4 (B) identify the most effective mental
5 health care and suicide prevention programs
6 conducted by the Secretary, including such pro-
7 grams conducted at a Center of Excellence;

8 (C) identify the cost-effectiveness of each
9 program identified under subparagraph (B);

10 (D) measure the satisfaction of patients
11 with respect to the care provided under each
12 such program; and

13 (E) propose best practices for caring for
14 individuals who suffer from mental health dis-
15 orders or are at risk of suicide, including such
16 practices conducted or suggested by other de-
17 partments or agencies of the Federal Govern-
18 ment, including the Substance Abuse and Men-
19 tal Health Services Administration of the De-
20 partment of Health and Human Services.

21 (3) THIRD PARTY.—Each evaluation conducted
22 under paragraph (1) shall be conducted by an inde-
23 pendent third party unaffiliated with the Depart-
24 ment of Veterans Affairs. Such third party shall
25 submit to the Secretary each such evaluation.

1 (b) ANNUAL SUBMISSION.—Not later than December
2 1 of each year, beginning in 2015, the Secretary shall sub-
3 mit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate
4 and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
5 Representatives a report that contains the following:

6 (1) The most recent evaluations submitted to
7 the Secretary under subsection (a)(3) that the Sec-
8 retary has not previously submitted to such Commit-
9 tees.

10 (2) Any recommendations the Secretary con-
11 siders appropriate.

12 **SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF INTERNET WEBSITE TO PROVIDE**
13 **INFORMATION REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH**
14 **CARE SERVICES.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—Using funds made available to the
16 Secretary of Veterans Affairs to publish the Internet
17 websites of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Sec-
18 retary shall survey the existing Internet websites and in-
19 formation resources of the Department to publish an
20 Internet website that serves as a centralized source to pro-
21 vide veterans with information regarding all of the mental
22 health care services provided by the Secretary.

23 (b) ELEMENTS.—The Internet website published
24 under subsection (a) shall provide to veterans information
25 regarding all of the mental health care services available

1 in the Veteran Integrated Service Network that the vet-
2 eran is seeking such services, including, with respect to
3 each medical center, Vet Center (as defined in section
4 1712A of title 38, United States Code), and community-
5 based outpatient center in the Veterans Integrated Service
6 Network—

7 (1) the name and contact information of each
8 social work office;

9 (2) the name and contact information of each
10 mental health clinic;

11 (3) a list of appropriate staff; and

12 (4) any other information the Secretary deter-
13 mines appropriate.

14 (c) UPDATED INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall
15 ensure that the information described in subsection (b)
16 that is published on the Internet website under subsection
17 (a) is updated not less than once every 90 days.

18 (d) OUTREACH.—In carrying out this section, the
19 Secretary shall ensure that the outreach conducted under
20 section 1720F(i) of title 38, United States Code, includes
21 information regarding the Internet website published
22 under subsection (a).

1 **SEC. 4. PILOT PROGRAM FOR REPAYMENT OF EDU-**
2 **CATIONAL LOANS FOR CERTAIN PSYCHIA-**
3 **TRISTS OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRA-**
4 **TION.**

5 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans
6 Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to repay loans of
7 individuals described in subsection (b) that—

8 (1) were used by such individuals to finance
9 education relating to psychiatric medicine, including
10 education leading to—

11 (A) a degree of doctor of medicine; or

12 (B) a degree of doctor of osteopathy; and

13 (2) were obtained from any of the following:

14 (A) A governmental entity.

15 (B) A private financial institution.

16 (C) A school.

17 (D) Any other authorized entity as deter-
18 mined by the Secretary.

19 (b) **ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.**—

20 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2), an
21 individual eligible for participation in the pilot pro-
22 gram is an individual who—

23 (A) either—

24 (i) is licensed or eligible for licensure
25 to practice psychiatric medicine in the Vet-

1 erans Health Administration of the De-
2 partment of Veterans Affairs; or

3 (ii) is enrolled in the final year of a
4 residency program leading to a specialty
5 qualification in psychiatric medicine that is
6 approved by the Accreditation Council for
7 Graduate Medical Education; and

8 (B) demonstrates a commitment to a long-
9 term career as a psychiatrist in the Veterans
10 Health Administration, as determined by the
11 Secretary.

12 (2) PROHIBITION ON SIMULTANEOUS ELIGI-
13 BILITY.—An individual who is participating in any
14 other program of the Federal Government that re-
15 pays the educational loans of the individual is not el-
16 igible to participate in the pilot program.

17 (c) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select not less
18 than 10 individuals described in subsection (b) to partici-
19 pate in the pilot program for each year in which the Sec-
20 retary carries out the pilot program.

21 (d) PERIOD OF OBLIGATED SERVICE.—The Sec-
22 retary shall enter into an agreement with each individual
23 selected under subsection (c) in which such individual
24 agrees to serve a period of two or more years of obligated

1 service for the Veterans Health Administration in the field
2 of psychiatric medicine, as determined by the Secretary.

3 (e) LOAN REPAYMENTS.—

4 (1) AMOUNTS.—Subject to paragraph (2), a
5 loan repayment under this section may consist of
6 payment of the principal, interest, and related ex-
7 penses of a loan obtained by an individual who is
8 participating in the pilot program for all educational
9 expenses (including tuition, fees, books, and labora-
10 tory expenses) of such individual relating to edu-
11 cation described in subsection (a)(1).

12 (2) LIMIT.—For each year of obligated service
13 that an individual who is participating in the pilot
14 program agrees to serve under subsection (d), the
15 Secretary may pay not more than \$30,000 in loan
16 repayment on behalf of such individual.

17 (f) BREACH.—

18 (1) LIABILITY.—An individual who participates
19 in the pilot program and fails to satisfy the period
20 of obligated service under subsection (d) shall be lia-
21 ble to the United States, in lieu of such obligated
22 service, for the amount that has been paid or is pay-
23 able to or on behalf of the individual under the pilot
24 program, reduced by the proportion that the number
25 of days served for completion of the period of obli-

1 gated service bears to the total number of days in
2 the period of obligated service of such individual.

3 (2) REPAYMENT PERIOD.—Any amount of dam-
4 ages that the United States is entitled to recover
5 under this subsection shall be paid to the United
6 States not later than one year after the date of the
7 breach of the agreement.

8 (g) REPORT.—

9 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than two years
10 after the date on which the pilot program under sub-
11 section (a) commences, the Secretary shall submit to
12 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate
13 and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
14 House of Representatives a report on the pilot pro-
15 gram.

16 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by para-
17 graph (1) shall include the following:

18 (A) The number of individuals who partici-
19 pated in the pilot program, including the num-
20 ber of new hires.

21 (B) The locations in which such individuals
22 were employed by the Department, including
23 how many such locations were rural or urban
24 locations.

1 (C) An assessment of the quality of the
2 work performed by such individuals in the
3 course of such employment, including the per-
4 formance reviews of such individuals.

5 (D) The number of psychiatrists the Sec-
6 retary determines is needed by the Department
7 in the future.

8 (3) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days
9 before the date on which the pilot program termi-
10 nates under subsection (i), the Secretary shall sub-
11 mit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
12 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of
13 the House of Representatives an update to the re-
14 port submitted under paragraph (1) and any rec-
15 ommendations that the Secretary considers appro-
16 priate.

17 (h) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe
18 regulations to carry out this section, including standards
19 for qualified loans and authorized payees and other terms
20 and conditions for the making of loan repayments.

21 (i) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out the
22 pilot program shall expire on the date that is three years
23 after the date on which the Secretary commences the pilot
24 program.

1 **SEC. 5. PILOT PROGRAM ON COMMUNITY OUTREACH.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
3 shall establish a pilot program to assist veterans
4 transitioning from serving on active duty and to improve
5 the access of veterans to mental health services.

6 (b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out the
7 pilot program under subsection (a) at not less than five
8 Veterans Integrated Service Networks that have a large
9 population of veterans who—

10 (1) served in the reserve components of the
11 Armed Forces; or

12 (2) are transitioning into communities with an
13 established population of veterans after having re-
14 cently separated from the Armed Forces.

15 (c) FUNCTIONS.—The pilot program at each Vet-
16 erans Integrated Service Network described in subsection
17 (b) shall include the following:

18 (1) A community oriented veteran peer support
19 network, carried out in partnership with an appro-
20 priate entity with experience in peer support pro-
21 grams, that—

22 (A) establishes peer support training
23 guidelines;

24 (B) develops a network of veteran peer
25 support counselors to meet the demands of the

1 communities in the Veterans Integrated Service
2 Network;

3 (C) conducts training of veteran peer sup-
4 port counselors;

5 (D) with respect to one medical center se-
6 lected by the Secretary in each such Veterans
7 Integrated Service Network, has—

8 (i) a designated peer support spe-
9 cialist who acts as a liaison to the commu-
10 nity oriented veteran peer network; and

11 (ii) a certified mental health profes-
12 sional designated as the community ori-
13 ented veteran peer network mentor; and

14 (E) is readily available to veterans, includ-
15 ing pursuant to the Veterans Integrated Service
16 Network cooperating and working with State
17 and local governments and appropriate entities.

18 (2) A community outreach team for each med-
19 ical center selected by the Secretary pursuant to
20 paragraph (1)(D) that—

21 (A) assists veterans transitioning into com-
22 munities;

23 (B) establishes a veteran transition advi-
24 sory group to facilitate outreach activities;

1 (C) includes the participation of appro-
2 priate community organizations, State and local
3 governments, colleges and universities, cham-
4 bers of commerce and other local business orga-
5 nizations, and organizations that provide legal
6 aid or advice; and

7 (D) coordinates with the Veterans Inte-
8 grated Service Network regarding the Veterans
9 Integrated Service Network carrying out an an-
10 nual mental health summit to assess the status
11 of veteran mental health care in the community
12 and to develop new or innovative means to pro-
13 vide mental health services to veterans.

14 (d) REPORTS.—

15 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 18
16 months after the date on which the pilot program
17 under subsection (a) commences, the Secretary shall
18 submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
19 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of
20 the House of Representatives a report on the pilot
21 program. With respect to each Veterans Integrated
22 Service Network described in subsection (b), the re-
23 port shall include—

24 (A) a full description of the peer support
25 model implemented under the pilot program,

1 participation data, and data pertaining to past
2 and current mental health related hospitaliza-
3 tions and fatalities;

4 (B) recommendations on implementing
5 peer support networks throughout the Depart-
6 ment;

7 (C) whether the mental health resources
8 made available under the pilot program for
9 members of the reserve components of the
10 Armed Forces is effective; and

11 (D) a full description of the activities and
12 effectiveness of community outreach coordi-
13 nating teams under the pilot program, including
14 partnerships that have been established with
15 appropriate entities.

16 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days
17 before the date on which the pilot program termi-
18 nates under subsection (e), the Secretary shall sub-
19 mit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
20 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of
21 the House of Representatives an update to the re-
22 port submitted under paragraph (1).

23 (e) CONSTRUCTION.—This section may not be con-
24 strued to authorize the Secretary to hire additional em-

1 ployees of the Department to carry out the pilot program
2 under subsection (a).

3 (f) **TERMINATION.**—The authority of the Secretary to
4 carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) shall ter-
5 minate on the date that is three years after the date on
6 which the pilot program commences.

7 **SEC. 6. COLLABORATION ON SUICIDE PREVENTION EF-**
8 **FORTS BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
9 **ERANS AFFAIRS AND NON-PROFIT MENTAL**
10 **HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS.**

11 (a) **COLLABORATION.**—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
12 fairs may collaborate with non-profit mental health orga-
13 nizations to prevent suicide among veterans as follows:

14 (1) To improve the efficiency and effectiveness
15 of suicide prevention efforts carried out by the Sec-
16 retary and non-profit mental health organizations.

17 (2) To assist non-profit mental health organiza-
18 tions with the suicide prevention efforts of such or-
19 ganizations through the use of the expertise of em-
20 ployees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

21 (3) To jointly carry out suicide prevention ef-
22 forts.

23 (b) **EXCHANGE OF RESOURCES.**—In carrying out any
24 collaboration under subsection (a), the Secretary and any
25 non-profit mental health organization with which the Sec-

1 reary is collaborating under such subsection shall ex-
2 change training sessions and best practices to help with
3 the suicide prevention efforts of the Department and such
4 organization.

5 (c) DIRECTOR OF SUICIDE PREVENTION COORDINA-
6 TION.—The Secretary shall select within the Department
7 a Director of Suicide Prevention Coordination to under-
8 take any collaboration with non-profit mental health orga-
9 nizations under this section or any other provision of law.

10 **SEC. 7. ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH**
11 **CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS OF COMBAT**
12 **SERVICE DURING CERTAIN PERIODS OF HOS-**
13 **TILITIES AND WAR.**

14 Paragraph (3) of section 1710(e) of title 38, United
15 States Code, is amended to read as follows:

16 “(3) In the case of care for a veteran described in
17 paragraph (1)(D), hospital care, medical services, and
18 nursing home care may be provided under or by virtue
19 of subsection (a)(2)(F) only during the following periods:

20 “(A) Except as provided by subparagraph (B),
21 with respect to a veteran described in paragraph
22 (1)(D) who is discharged or released from the active
23 military, naval, or air service after January 27,
24 2003, the five-year period beginning on the date of
25 such discharge or release.

1 “(B) With respect to a veteran described in
2 paragraph (1)(D) who is discharged or released from
3 the active military, naval, or air service after Janu-
4 ary 1, 2009, and before January 1, 2011, but did
5 not enroll to receive such hospital care, medical serv-
6 ices, or nursing home care pursuant to such para-
7 graph during the five-year period described in sub-
8 paragraph (A), the one-year period beginning on
9 January 1, 2015.

10 “(C) With respect to a veteran described in
11 paragraph (1)(D) who is discharged or released from
12 the active military, naval, or air service on or before
13 January 27, 2003, and did not enroll in the patient
14 enrollment system under section 1705 of this title on
15 or before such date, the three-year period beginning
16 on January 27, 2008.”.

17 **SEC. 8. PROHIBITION ON NEW APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-
19 priated to carry out this Act and the amendments made
20 by this Act, and this Act and such amendments shall be
21 carried out using amounts otherwise made available for
22 such purposes.

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Veterans Af-

fairs, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.”.