

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 5516

(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5516

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 8, 2021

Mr. ELLZEY (for himself and Mr. BOST) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership program 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 “VITAL Assessment
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. VETERANS INTEGRATION TO ACADEMIC LEADER-**
2 **SHIP PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF**
3 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
5 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans
6 Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-
7 fairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a
8 report on the Veterans Integration to Academic Leader-
9 ship program of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The
10 report shall include the following:

11 (1) The number of medical centers of the De-
12 partment, institutions of higher learning, non-college
13 degree programs, and student veterans supported by
14 the program, and relevant trends since the program
15 began.

16 (2) The staff and resources allocated to the
17 program, and relevant trends since the program
18 began.

19 (3) An assessment of the outcomes and effec-
20 tiveness of the program in—

21 (A) supporting student veterans;

22 (B) connecting student veterans to needed
23 services of the Department or services provided
24 by non-Department entities;

25 (C) addressing the mental health needs of
26 student veterans;

1 (D) lowering the suicide risk of student
2 veterans; and

3 (E) helping student veterans achieve edu-
4 cational goals.

5 (4) An assessment of barriers to expanding the
6 program and how the Secretary intends to address
7 such barriers.

8 (5) An assessment of whether the program
9 should be expanded outside of the Office of Mental
10 Health and Suicide Prevention to support students
11 veterans with needs unrelated to mental health or
12 suicide.

13 (b) UNIFORM BEST PRACTICES, GOALS, AND MEAS-
14 URES.—The Secretary shall establish best practices, goals,
15 and measures for the Veterans Integration to Academic
16 Leadership program of the Department that are uniform
17 among the medical centers of the Department.

18 (c) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall conduct out-
19 reach among the Armed Forces, veterans service organiza-
20 tions, institutions of higher learning, and non-college de-
21 gree programs with respect to the Veterans Integration
22 to Academic Leadership program of the Department.

23 (d) ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary shall assess the
24 feasibility and advisability of including the suicide rate for
25 student veterans in the National Veteran Suicide Preven-

1 tion Annual Report of the Office of Mental Health and
2 Suicide Prevention of the Department.

3 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) The term “institution of higher learning”
5 has the meaning given that term in section 3452 of
6 title 38, United States Code.

7 (2) The term “student veteran” means the fol-
8 lowing:

9 (A) A veteran or member of the Armed
10 Forces using educational assistance under any
11 of the following provisions of law:

12 (i) Chapter 30, 31, 32, or 33 of title
13 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606
14 or 1607 of title 10, United States Code.

15 (ii) Section 116 of the Harry W.
16 Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance
17 Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–48; 38
18 U.S.C. 3001 note).

19 (iii) Section 8006 of the American
20 Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law
21 117–2; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note prec.).

22 (B) A veteran who is enrolled in an institu-
23 tion of higher learning or other training pro-
24 gram, without regard to whether the veteran is

- 1 using educational assistance specified in sub-
- 2 paragraph (A).