

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**  
**TO H.R. 4782**  
**OFFERED BY Mr. Abraham**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2       This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Compensa-  
3 tion Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2016”.

**4 SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSA-**  
**5                                   TION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY**  
**6                                   COMPENSATION.**

7       (a) **RATE ADJUSTMENT.**—Effective on December 1,  
8 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in  
9 accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in ef-  
10 fect on November 30, 2016, for the payment of disability  
11 compensation and dependency and indemnity compensa-  
12 tion under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

13       (b) **AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.**—The dollar  
14 amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are  
15 the following:

16               (1) **WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.**—  
17       Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of  
18       title 38, United States Code.

1           (2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPEND-  
2           ENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts under section  
3           1115(1) of such title.

4           (3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar  
5           amount under section 1162 of such title.

6           (4) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSA-  
7           TION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.—Each of the dollar  
8           amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of sec-  
9           tion 1311 of such title.

10          (5) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSA-  
11          TION TO CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts  
12          under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

13          (c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—

14           (1) PERCENTAGE.—Except as provided in para-  
15           graph (2), each dollar amount described in sub-  
16           section (b) shall be increased by the same percentage  
17           as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable  
18           under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.  
19           401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1,  
20           2016, as a result of a determination under section  
21           215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

22           (2) ROUNDING.—Each dollar amount increased  
23           under paragraph (1), if not a whole dollar amount,  
24           shall be rounded to the next lower whole dollar  
25           amount.

1 (d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-  
2 fairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the in-  
3 creases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability  
4 compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Pub-  
5 lic Law 85–857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received  
6 compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States  
7 Code.

8 (e) PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.—The Sec-  
9 retary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal  
10 Register the amounts specified in subsection (b), as in-  
11 creased under this section, not later than the date on  
12 which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the  
13 Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required  
14 to be published by reason of a determination made under  
15 section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2017.

16 **SEC. 3. TRANSPORTATION OF DECEASED VETERANS TO**  
17 **VETERANS' CEMETERIES.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 2308 of  
19 title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as fol-  
20 lows:

21 “(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary may pay, in  
22 addition to any amount paid pursuant to section 2302 or  
23 2307 of this title, the cost of transportation of the de-  
24 ceased veteran described in paragraph (1) or (2) of sub-  
25 section (b) for burial in a national cemetery or a covered

1 veterans' cemetery. Such payment shall not exceed the  
2 cost of transportation to the national cemetery nearest the  
3 veteran's last place of residence in which burial space is  
4 available.

5       “(2) The Secretary may pay, in addition to any  
6 amount paid pursuant to section 2302 or 2307 of this  
7 title, the cost of transportation of the deceased veteran  
8 described in subsection (b)(3) for burial in a national cem-  
9 etery. Such payment shall not exceed the cost of transpor-  
10 tation to the national cemetery nearest the veteran's last  
11 place of residence in which burial space is available.”.

12       (b) COVERED VETERANS' CEMETERY DEFINED.—  
13 Section 2308 of such title is amended by adding at the  
14 end the following new subsection:

15       “(c) COVERED VETERANS' CEMETERY DEFINED.—  
16 In this section, the term ‘covered veterans’ cemetery’  
17 means, with respect to a deceased veteran described in  
18 subsection (b), a veterans’ cemetery owned by a State or  
19 a tribal organization (as defined in section 3765(4) of this  
20 title) in which the deceased veteran is eligible to be bur-  
21 ied.”.

22       (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 2308 of  
23 such title is amended in the section heading by adding  
24 at the end the following: “**or a veterans’ cemetery**”.

1 (d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
2 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by striking  
3 the item relating to section 2308 and inserting the fol-  
4 lowing new item:

“2308. Transportation of deceased veterans to a national cemetery or a vet-  
erans’ cemetery.”.

5 **SEC. 4. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HEADSTONES,**  
6 **MARKERS, AND MEDALLIONS FOR MEDAL OF**  
7 **HONOR RECIPIENTS.**

8 Section 2306(d) of title 38, United States Code, is  
9 amended by adding at the end the following new para-  
10 graph:

11 “(5)(A) In carrying out this subsection with respect  
12 to a deceased individual described in subparagraph (C),  
13 the Secretary shall furnish, upon request, a headstone or  
14 marker under paragraph (1) or a medallion under para-  
15 graph (4) that signifies the deceased’s status as a Medal  
16 of Honor recipient.

17 “(B) If the Secretary furnished a headstone, marker,  
18 or medallion under paragraph (1) or (4) for a deceased  
19 individual described in subparagraph (C) that does not  
20 signify the deceased’s status as a Medal of Honor recipi-  
21 ent, the Secretary shall, upon request, replace such head-  
22 stone, marker, or medallion with a headstone, marker, or  
23 medallion, as the case may be, that so signifies the  
24 deceased’s status as a Medal of Honor recipient.

1       “(C) A deceased individual described in this subpara-  
2 graph is a deceased individual who—

3           “(i) served in the Armed Forces on or after  
4 April 6, 1917;

5           “(ii) is eligible for a headstone or marker fur-  
6 nished under paragraph (1) or a medallion furnished  
7 under paragraph (4) (or would be so eligible for  
8 such headstone, marker, or medallion but for the  
9 date of the death of the individual); and

10          “(iii) was awarded the Medal of Honor (includ-  
11 ing posthumously).”.

12 **SEC. 5. EXPANSION OF PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFI-**  
13 **CATE PROGRAM.**

14       (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 112(a) of title 38, United  
15 States Code, is amended by inserting after “conditions,”  
16 the following: “persons eligible for burial in a national  
17 cemetery by reason of paragraph (2), (3), or (7) of section  
18 2402(a) of this title,”.

19       (b) **APPLICATION.**—The amendment made by sub-  
20 section (a) shall apply with respect to the death of a per-  
21 son eligible for burial in a national cemetery by reason  
22 of paragraph (2), (3), or (7) of section 2402(a) of title  
23 38, United States Code, occurring before, on, or after the  
24 date of the enactment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 6. BURIAL PLOTS AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEME-**  
2 **TERY FOR INDIVIDUALS AWARDED THE**  
3 **MEDAL OF HONOR.**

4 (a) **RESERVATION.**—Of the number of in-ground bur-  
5 ial plots available at Arlington National Cemetery as of  
6 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of  
7 the Army shall reserve 100 such plots to inter deceased  
8 individuals who have been awarded the Medal of Honor.

9 (b) **TERMINATION.**—The requirement under sub-  
10 section (a) shall terminate on the date on which the Sec-  
11 retary of the Army to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs  
12 and the Committees on Armed Services of the House of  
13 Representatives and the Senate a report on the interment  
14 and inurnment capacity of Arlington National Cemetery  
15 that includes—

16 (1) the estimated date that the Secretary deter-  
17 mines the cemetery will reach maximum interment  
18 and inurnment capacity; and

19 (2) in light of the unique and iconic meaning of  
20 the cemetery to the United States, recommendations  
21 for legislative actions and nonlegislative options that  
22 the Secretary determines necessary to ensure that  
23 the maximum interment and inurnment capacity of  
24 the cemetery is not reached until well into the fu-  
25 ture, including such actions and options with respect  
26 to—

1 (A) redefining eligibility criteria for inter-  
2 ment and inurnment in the cemetery; and

3 (B) considerations for additional expansion  
4 opportunities beyond the current boundaries of  
5 the cemetery.

6 **SEC. 7. PILOT PROGRAM ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**

7 **AFFAIRS VETERAN ENGAGEMENT TEAM**  
8 **EVENTS.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—

10 (1) PILOT PROGRAM.—Beginning not later than  
11 October 1, 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
12 shall carry out a three-year pilot program under  
13 which the Secretary shall carry out events, to be  
14 known as “Veteran Engagement Team events”. The  
15 Secretary shall ensure that such events are carried  
16 out—

17 (A) during the first year during which the  
18 Secretary carries out the pilot program, at least  
19 once a month in a location within the jurisdic-  
20 tion of each of 10 regional offices of the De-  
21 partment of Veterans Affairs, including at least  
22 two regional offices in each of the five districts  
23 of the Veterans Benefits Administration under  
24 the organization of such Administration in ef-

1           fect as of the date of the enactment of this Act,  
2           and

3                   (B) during each of the second and third  
4           years during which the Secretary carries out  
5           the pilot program, at least once a month in a  
6           location within the jurisdiction of each of 15 re-  
7           gional offices of the Department, including at  
8           least three regional offices in each such district.

9           (2) VETERAN ENGAGEMENT TEAM EVENTS.—

10          During each Veteran Engagement Team event, the  
11          Secretary shall provide assistance to veterans in  
12          completing and adjudicating claims for disability  
13          compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United  
14          States Code, and for pension under chapter 15 of  
15          such title. The Secretary shall ensure that—

16                   (A) all Veteran Engagement Team events  
17          occur during the normal business hours of the  
18          sponsoring regional office;

19                   (B) the events are carried out at different  
20          locations within the jurisdiction of each regional  
21          office and at least 50 miles from any regional  
22          office;

23                   (C) a sufficient number of physicians (to  
24          be available for opinions only), veteran service  
25          representatives and rating veteran service rep-

1           representatives, and other personnel are available  
2           at the events to initiate, update, and finalize  
3           the completion and adjudication of claims;

4           (D) veterans service organizations have ac-  
5           cess to the events for purposes of providing as-  
6           sistance to veterans; and

7           (E) a veteran who is unable to complete  
8           and adjudicate a claim at an event is informed  
9           of what additional information or actions are  
10          needed to finalize the claim.

11       (b) LOCATION.—In selecting locations for Veteran  
12       Engagement Team events under this section, the Sec-  
13       retary shall—

14           (1) coordinate with veteran service organiza-  
15           tions and State and local veterans agencies; and

16           (2) seek to select locations that are community-  
17           based and easily accessible.

18       (c) TRANSFER OF PERSONNEL.—

19           (1) PHYSICIANS.—The Secretary may not per-  
20           manently transfer any physician employed by the  
21           Veterans Health Administration for the purpose of  
22           staffing a Veteran Engagement Team event.

23           (2) PAYMENT OF SALARIES.—Any amount pay-  
24           able to an employee of the Department for work per-  
25           formed at a Veteran Engagement Team event is

1 payable only from amounts otherwise available for  
2 the payment of the salary of the employee. No addi-  
3 tional amounts are authorized to be appropriated  
4 under this section for the payment of salaries for  
5 Department employee.

6 (d) OTHER AUTHORITIES.—In carrying out the pilot  
7 program under this section, the Secretary may—

8 (1) coordinate with States, local governments,  
9 nonprofit organizations, and private sector entities  
10 to use facilities to host Veteran Engagement Team  
11 events for no or minimal costs; and

12 (2) accept, on a without compensation basis,  
13 services provided by non-Department physicians in  
14 rendering medical opinions relating to claims for  
15 compensation and pension.

16 (e) CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS.—In car-  
17 rying out the pilot program under this section, the Sec-  
18 retary shall collect and analyze information about the cus-  
19 tomer satisfaction of veterans who have received assist-  
20 ance at an Veteran Engagement Team event.

21 (f) REPORTS.—Not later than April 30, 2017, and  
22 annually thereafter beginning on October 1, 2017, for the  
23 duration of the program, the Secretary shall submit to  
24 Congress a report on the implementation and effectiveness  
25 of the events. Such report shall include—

1           (1) the number and types of claims completed  
2           and adjudicated at the events;

3           (2) the number and types of claims for which  
4           assistance was sought at the events that were not  
5           completed or adjudicated at the events and the rea-  
6           sons such claims were not completed or adjudicated;  
7           and

8           (3) an analysis of the customer satisfaction of  
9           veterans who have received assistance at an event  
10          based on the information collected under subsection  
11          (e).

