

[Discussion Draft]

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 3495**

OFFERED BY M . _____

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Improve Well-Being
3 for Veterans Act”.

**4 SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS GRANTS FOR
5 COORDINATING ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING
6 CERTAIN SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND
7 THEIR FAMILIES.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Chief Re-
9 adjustment Counseling Officer (hereinafter referred to as
10 the “Officer”) shall establish a program under which, for
11 each fiscal year, the Officer shall make grants in accord-
12 ance with this section—

13 (1) for the first fiscal year, to not more than
14 10 community-based coordinating organizations; and

15 (2) for each subsequent fiscal year, to—

1 (A) any community-based coordinating or-
2 ganization that received a grant under this sec-
3 tion for the preceding fiscal year; and

4 (B) 10 additional community-based coordi-
5 nating organizations.

6 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
7 under this section, a community-based coordinating orga-
8 nization shall—

9 (1) be—

10 (A) an incorporated private institution or
11 foundation—

12 (i) no part of the net earnings of
13 which incurs to the benefit of any member,
14 founder, contributor, or individual;

15 (ii) that has a governing board that
16 would be responsible for the operation of
17 the suicide prevention services provided
18 under this section; and

19 (B) a corporation wholly owned and con-
20 trolled by an organization meeting the require-
21 ments of clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph
22 (A);

23 (C) a tribally designated housing entity (as
24 defined in section 4 of the Native American

1 Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act
2 of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103)); or

3 (D) a community-based organization
4 that—

5 (i) is physically based in the targeted
6 community; and

7 (ii) has demonstrated an ability to ef-
8 fectively network and partner with commu-
9 nity partners that offer expanded covered
10 services for individuals, including veterans
11 and family members of veterans;

12 (2) in the case of an entity described in sub-
13 paragraph (A), (B), or (D) of paragraph (1), dem-
14 onstrate financial responsibility, as determined by
15 the Officer;

16 (3) submit to the Officer an application con-
17 taining—

18 (A) a description of the services proposed
19 to be provided using grant funds and the identi-
20 fied need for such services;

21 (B) clearly defined objectives for the provi-
22 sion of such services;

23 (C) a description and physical address of
24 the primary location of the coordinating organi-
25 zation;

1 (D) a description of the geographic area
2 and boundaries the coordinating organization
3 plans to serve during the year for which the ap-
4 plication applies;

5 (E) a description of the services the coordi-
6 nating organization proposes to delivery directly
7 and a description of any services the coordi-
8 nating organization proposes to deliver through
9 an agreement with a community partner;

10 (F) the amount of grant funds proposed to
11 be made available to community partners
12 through agreements;

13 (G) a detailed plan describing how the or-
14 ganization proposes to coordinate and deliver
15 such services to veterans and family members
16 of veterans, including—

17 (i) an identification of any community
18 partner with which the organization pro-
19 poses to work in delivering such services;

20 (ii) a description of any arrangement
21 in place between the organization and such
22 a partner as of the date of the submittal
23 of the application; and

24 (iii) an identification of how long any
25 such arrangement has been in place;

1 (H) an estimate of the number of veterans
2 and family members of veterans proposed to be
3 provided such services using the grant and the
4 basis for such estimate;

5 (I) evidence of the experience of the orga-
6 nization (and any community partner) in pro-
7 viding such services to veterans and family
8 members of veterans;

9 (J) a description of any outreach the co-
10 ordinating organization plans to provide regard-
11 ing the services provided or coordinated using
12 the grant;

13 (K) a description of the financial controls
14 in place, or to be put in place, to track the ex-
15 penditure of grant funds;

16 (L) a description of the managerial and
17 technological capacity of the organization—

18 (i) to coordinate the delivery of such
19 services to veterans and family members of
20 veterans;

21 (ii) to assess on an ongoing basis the
22 needs of veterans and family members of
23 veterans;

24 (iii) to coordinate the provision of
25 services to a veteran with the services pro-

1 vided by the Department of Veterans Af-
2 fairs for which such veteran is eligible;

3 (iv) to tailor services to the needs of
4 veterans and family members of veterans;

5 (v) to continuously seek new sources
6 of assistance to ensure the continuity of
7 services for veterans and family members
8 of veterans; and

9 (vi) to measure the effects on the lives
10 of veterans and family members of vet-
11 erans who receive such services provided by
12 the organization; and

13 (M) such other information and assurances
14 as the Officer may require.

15 (c) COVERED SERVICES.—For purposes of the grant
16 program under this section—

17 (1) specific covered services are—

18 (A) outreach to identify veterans at risk of
19 suicide, with emphasis on veterans who are at
20 highest risk;

21 (B) non-clinical individual counseling;

22 (C) education on suicide risk and preven-
23 tion to families and communities; and

24 (D) case management services; and

25 (2) expanded covered services are—

1 (A) specific covered services;

2 (B) peer support services;

3 (C) assistance in obtaining and coordi-
4 nating the provision of other benefits and serv-
5 ices provided by the Federal Government, a
6 State or local government, or a nonprofit orga-
7 nization, including—

8 (i) vocational and rehabilitation coun-
9 seling;

10 (ii) supportive services for homeless
11 veterans;

12 (iii) employment and training services;

13 and

14 (iv) educational assistance;

15 (D) assistance in obtaining any benefits
16 from the Department that the veteran at risk of
17 suicide or veteran family may be eligible to re-
18 ceive; and

19 (E) additional services, as determined by
20 the Officer.

21 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The recipient of a grant
23 under this section shall use the grant to—

24 (A) provide specific covered services to vet-
25 erans and family members of veterans; and

1 (B) coordinate the provision of expanded
2 covered services to veterans and family mem-
3 bers of veterans.

4 (2) AGREEMENTS WITH COMMUNITY PART-
5 NERS.—If a coordinating organization that receives
6 a grant submits an annual report under subsection
7 (g)(1)(A) in which the organization demonstrates a
8 need for the provision of expanded covered services,
9 the organization may use any grant funds provided
10 for the subsequent fiscal year to enter into an agree-
11 ment with a community partner under which the co-
12 ordinating organization shall provide funds to a
13 community partner for the provision of expanded
14 covered services to veterans and family members of
15 veterans.

16 (3) RESTRICTION ON USE OF FUNDS.—A grant
17 under this section may not be used to provide tem-
18 porary cash assistance or clinical care.

19 (e) SELECTION OF RECIPIENTS.—In selecting coordi-
20 nating organizations for the award of grants under this
21 section from among such organizations that meet the eligi-
22 bility requirements under subsection (b), the Officer
23 shall—

24 (1) seek to distribute the grants to coordinating
25 organizations in locations—

1 (A) that are equitably distributed across
2 geographic regions, including rural commu-
3 nities, territories, and Tribal lands; or

4 (B) where high rates of veteran suicides
5 have occurred; and

6 (2) give preference to organizations that have
7 demonstrated the ability to coordinate expanded cov-
8 ered services.

9 (f) GRANT AMOUNTS, INTERVALS OF PAYMENT, AND
10 MATCHING FUNDS.—

11 (1) AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant awarded
12 to a coordinating organization under this section
13 shall not exceed—

14 (A) in the case of a grant for the first year
15 the organization receives a grant, \$500,000;
16 and

17 (B) in the case of a grant for any subse-
18 quent year for which the organization receives
19 a grant, \$1,000,000.

20 (2) PAYMENT INTERVALS.—The Officer may
21 establish intervals of payment for the administration
22 of the grant; and

23 (3) MATCHING FUNDS.—The Officer shall re-
24 quire a coordinating organization that receives a

1 grant under this section to provide matching funds
2 as follows:

3 (A) In the case of the first year the organi-
4 zation receives a grant, 100 percent of the
5 grant amount.

6 (B) In the case of any subsequent year for
7 which the organization receives a grant, 50 per-
8 cent of the grant amount.

9 (g) ADMINISTRATION OF GRANT PROGRAM.—

10 (1) AGREEMENTS WITH GRANT RECIPIENTS.—

11 The Officer shall enter into an agreement with each
12 coordinating organization that receives a grant
13 under this section under which—

14 (A) the organization shall agree to submit
15 to the Officer an annual report (and such other
16 reports as the Officer may request) that in-
17 cludes a description of the projects carried out
18 using grant funds during the year covered by
19 the report;

20 (B) the organization shall agree to provide
21 information, to the extent feasible, to the Offi-
22 cer for the purposes of measuring, using
23 metrics developed pursuant to subsection (h)(2)
24 any effect the services provided using the grant
25 have on the quality of life of veterans and fam-

1 ily members of veterans who receive such serv-
2 ices;

3 (C) the organization shall agree to provide
4 such information and permit such access to the
5 facilities of the organization as the Officer de-
6 termines necessary to carry out the monitoring
7 activities under paragraph (5); and

8 (D) the Officer agrees to provide, either di-
9 rectly or pursuant to a contract, to the coordi-
10 nating organization training and technical as-
11 sistance with respect to—

12 (i) the data required to be collected
13 and shared with the Department;

14 (ii) the means of data collection and
15 sharing;

16 (iii) familiarization with and appro-
17 priate use of any tool to be used to meas-
18 ure the effectiveness of the use of the fi-
19 nancial assistance provided; and

20 (iv) the requirements for reporting
21 under subparagraph (A) on services pro-
22 vided using the grant.

23 (2) OUTREACH TO COORDINATING ORGANIZA-
24 TIONS.—Not sooner than 30 days after the sub-
25 mittal of the report required under subsection

1 (h)(4), the Officer shall conduct appropriate out-
2 reach to make appropriate coordinating organiza-
3 tions aware of the grant program under this section.

4 (3) INFORMATION ON POTENTIAL BENE-
5 FICIARIES.—The Officer may make available to
6 grant recipients the following information with re-
7 spect to individuals who may be eligible for services
8 provided using the grant:

9 (A) Confirmation of the status of an indi-
10 vidual as a veteran.

11 (B) Confirmation of whether an individual
12 is in receipt of medical care furnished by the
13 Department or has recently received such care.

14 (4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR
15 TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—In addi-
16 tion to amounts otherwise made available to carry
17 out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
18 priated \$1,000,000 for each fiscal year for the provi-
19 sion of training and technical assistance under para-
20 graph (1)(C).

21 (5) MONITORING ACTIVITIES.—For each coordi-
22 nating organization that receives a grant under this
23 section, the Officer shall develop a written moni-
24 toring plan and conduct monitoring of such organi-
25 zation as provided in the plan. Each such plan shall

1 provide for a specified number of desk audits and
2 visits by the Officer to the facilities of the organiza-
3 tion for the purposes of assessing—

4 (A) the extent to which the organization
5 has used the grant to provide services in com-
6 pliance with the agreement entered into under
7 paragraph (1);

8 (B) the soundness with which the organi-
9 zation has managed the grant funds; and

10 (C) the financial controls of the organiza-
11 tion.

12 (h) CONSULTATION WITH WORKING GROUP IN DE-
13 VELOPMENT OF METRICS AND CRITERIA.—

14 (1) DEVELOPMENT OF METRICS AND CRI-
15 TERIA.—The Officer shall consult with the working
16 group established under paragraph (3) in the devel-
17 opment of each of the following:

18 (A) A framework for collecting and sharing
19 information about grant recipients in order to
20 improve the discovery of services available for
21 veterans and family members of veterans, set
22 forth by service type, locality, and eligibility cri-
23 teria.

24 (B) Evaluation criteria for use by grant re-
25 cipients to evaluate the effectiveness of the serv-

1 ices provided using grant funds to improve the
2 mental resiliency and mental outlook of vet-
3 erans at risk of suicide and family members of
4 such veterans.

5 (C) Metrics for measuring the effectiveness
6 of amounts made available to community part-
7 ners pursuant to subsection (d)(2).

8 (D) Any additional expanded covered serv-
9 ices to be included pursuant to subsection
10 (c)(2)(D).

11 (E) The method by which the Officer de-
12 termines financial responsibility for purposes of
13 subsection (b)(2).

14 (F) Additional application criteria for the
15 grant program pursuant to subsection
16 (b)(3)(F).

17 (G) The method by which the Officer pro-
18 vides training and technical assistance pursuant
19 to subsection (f)(1)(C).

20 (2) DEVELOPMENT OF TOOL FOR MEASURING
21 PROGRAM EFFECTS.—The Office of Research and
22 Development of the Department of Veterans Affairs
23 shall develop, in consultation with the working group
24 established under paragraph (3), a tool for meas-
25 uring the effects of the provision of specific covered

1 services and expanded covered services on the qual-
2 ity of life or well being of veterans and family mem-
3 bers of veterans. The Officer shall ensure that such
4 tool is made available for use by grant recipients
5 **【and community partners】**.

6 (3) ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP.—
7 The Officer shall establish a working group which
8 shall consist of members of each of the following:

9 (A) A veterans service organization.

10 (B) A national organization representing
11 potential community partners of coordinating
12 organizations in providing services for veterans
13 and family members of veterans, including a
14 national organization that—

15 (i) represents mayors;

16 (ii) represents first responders; or

17 (iii) represents chiefs of police and
18 sheriffs.

19 (C) An organization with which the De-
20 partment has a current memoranda of agree-
21 ment or understanding related to mental health
22 or suicide prevention.

23 (D) A State department of veterans af-
24 fairs.

1 (E) A national organization representing
2 employees of the Department.

3 (F) A national organization representing
4 members of the Armed Forces.

5 (G) A national organization representing
6 members of the reserve components of the
7 Armed Forces.

8 (H) A national organization representing
9 members of the Coast Guard.

10 (I) A Vet Center (as such term is defined
11 in section 1712A(h)(1) of title 38, United
12 States Code, that is located in a rural or highly
13 rural area.

14 (J) The National Alliance on Mental Ill-
15 ness.

16 (K) The Centers for Disease Control and
17 Prevention.

18 (L) The Substance Abuse and Mental
19 Health Services Administration of the Depart-
20 ment of Health and Human Services.

21 (M) The PREVENTS task force estab-
22 lished under Executive Order 13861.

23 (N) An organization with experience in
24 creating measurement tools for purposes of de-
25 termining programmatic effectiveness.

1 (O) Any other organization the Officer
2 considers appropriate.

3 (4) REPORT TO CONGRESS ON METRICS AND
4 CRITERIA.—Not later than 30 days before the Offi-
5 cer begins soliciting applications for the grant pro-
6 gram under this section, the Officer shall submit to
7 Congress a report that includes—

8 (A) the criteria for the award of a grant
9 under this section;

10 (B) a description of the tool developed
11 under paragraph (2); and

12 (C) the framework for the sharing of infor-
13 mation required under paragraph (1)(A).

14 (i) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

15 (1) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than 18
16 months after the date on which the first grant is
17 awarded under this section, the Officer shall submit
18 to the Committees on Appropriations and Veterans'
19 Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
20 Committees on Appropriations and Veterans' Affairs
21 of the Senate a report on the grant program under
22 this section. Such report shall include each of the
23 following;

24 (A) An assessment of the effectiveness of
25 the program, including the effectiveness of com-

1 community partners in providing services to vet-
2 erans and family members of veterans.

3 (B) A list of grant recipients and any com-
4 munity partners and the amount of the grant
5 received by each recipient and partner.

6 (C) A detailed accounting of how the grant
7 funds were used, including—

8 (i) executive compensation;

9 (ii) overhead costs; and

10 (iii) other indirect costs.

11 (D) The number of veterans supported by
12 each grant recipient, including through services
13 provided to family members of veterans,
14 disaggregated by—

15 (i) age;

16 (ii) gender;

17 (iii) whether each such veteran is en-
18 rolled in the patient enrollment system of
19 the Department under section 1705 of title
20 38, United States Code;

21 (iv) type of service for which such vet-
22 eran was referred; and

23 (v) the percentage of all such referrals
24 made to the Department.

1 (E) An evaluation of the program based on
2 the use of the tool developed pursuant to sub-
3 section (h)(2).

4 (F) The types of data the Department was
5 able to collect and share with grant recipients,
6 including a characterization of the benefits of
7 that data.

8 (G) A description of any outreach activities
9 conducted by the coordinating organization with
10 respect to services provided using the grant.

11 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than three years
12 after the date on which the first grant is awarded
13 under this section, the Officer shall submit to the
14 Committees on Appropriations and Veterans' Affairs
15 of the House of Representatives and the Committees
16 on Appropriations and Veterans' Affairs of the Sen-
17 ate a report that contains—

18 (A) follow-up information on each of the
19 elements covered by the interim report under
20 paragraph (1);

21 (B) an assessment of the increased capac-
22 ity of the Department to provide services to vet-
23 erans and family members of veterans,
24 disaggregated by State, as a result of the grant
25 program under this section; and

1 (C) an assessment of the feasibility and
2 advisability of extending or expanding the grant
3 program.

4 (j) THIRD PARTY ASSESSMENT.—

5 (1) STUDY OF GRANT PROGRAM.—Not later
6 than 90 days after the commencement of the grant
7 program under this section, the Officer shall seek to
8 enter into a contract with an appropriate entity de-
9 scribed in paragraph (3) under which the entity
10 shall conduct a study of the grant program. In
11 conducting such study the entity shall—

12 (A) evaluate the effectiveness of the pro-
13 gram in addressing the factors that contribute
14 to veteran suicide through coordination centers
15 located in communities; and

16 (B) compare the results of the program
17 with other national programs in delivering re-
18 sources to veterans in the communities where
19 they live that address the factors that con-
20 tribute to veteran suicide.

21 (2) ASSESSMENT.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—The contract under
23 paragraph (1) shall provide that not later than
24 24 months after the commencement of the
25 grant program under this section, the appro-

1 appropriate entity shall submit to the Officer an as-
2 sessment based on the study conducted pursu-
3 ant to such contract.

4 (B) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Upon re-
5 ceipt of the assessment under subparagraph
6 (A), the Officer shall submit to Congress a copy
7 of the assessment.

8 (3) APPROPRIATE ENTITY.—An entity described
9 in this paragraph is an appropriate non-government
10 entity with experience optimizing and assessing or-
11 ganizations that deliver non-clinical services.

12 (k) TERMINATION.—The authority to make a grant
13 under this section shall terminate on the date that is three
14 years after the date on which the first grant is made under
15 this section.

16 (l) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

17 (1) The term “veteran at highest risk of sui-
18 cide” means a veteran who—

19 (A) has health risk factors, including—

20 (i) mental health challenges;

21 (ii) substance abuse;

22 (iii) serious or chronic health condi-
23 tions or pain;

24 (iv) traumatic brain injury;

1 (B) who has experienced or is experiencing
2 environmental risk factors, including—

3 (i) access to lethal means;

4 (ii) prolonged stress;

5 (iii) stressful life events.

6 (iv) exposure to the suicide of another
7 person or to graphic or sensationalized ac-
8 counts of suicide;

9 (v) unemployment;

10 (vi) homelessness;

11 (vii) recent loss; or

12 (viii) legal or financial challenges;

13 (C) has experienced historical risk factors,
14 including—

15 (i) previous suicide attempts;

16 (ii) family history of suicide;

17 (iii) history of abuse, neglect, or trau-
18 ma; or

19 (D) is not receiving health care or other
20 services furnished by the Department.

21 (2) The term “veteran” means any of the fol-
22 lowing:

23 (A) A veteran, as such term is defined in
24 section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

1 (B) Any individual who is a veteran or
2 member of the Armed Forces, including a mem-
3 ber of a reserve component of the Armed
4 Forces, who served on active duty in a theater
5 of combat operations or an area at a time dur-
6 ing which hostilities occurred in that area.

7 (C) Any individual who is a veteran or
8 member of the Armed Forces, including a mem-
9 ber of a reserve component of the Armed
10 Forces, who provided direct emergency medical
11 or mental health care, or mortuary services to
12 the casualties of combat operations or hos-
13 tilities, but who at the time was located outside
14 the theater of combat operations or area of hos-
15 tilities.

16 (D) Any individual who is a veteran or
17 member of the Armed Forces, including a mem-
18 ber of a reserve component of the Armed
19 Forces, who engaged in combat with an enemy
20 of the United States or against an opposing
21 military force in a theater of combat operations
22 or an area at a time during which hostilities oc-
23 curred in that area by remotely controlling an
24 unmanned aerial vehicle, notwithstanding
25 whether the physical location of such veteran or

1 member during such combat was within such
2 theater of combat operations or area.

3 (E) Any individual who received counseling
4 under section 1712A of title 38, United States
5 Code, before the date of the enactment of the
6 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
7 Year 2013.

8 (3) The term “family member” includes the fol-
9 lowing family members of a veteran:

10 (A) A parent.

11 (B) A spouse.

12 (C) A child.

13 (D) A sibling.

14 (E) A step-family member.

15 (F) An extended family member.

16 (G) Any other individual who resides with
17 the veteran.

18 (4) The term “veterans service organization”
19 means any organization recognized by the Secretary
20 of Veterans Affairs for the representation of vet-
21 erans included as part of the Directory of Veterans
22 Service Organizations.

