

**AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT IN THE
NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
OFFERED BY MR. BERGMAN OF MICHIGAN**

At the appropriate place insert the following:

1 **SEC. ____ . EXPANSION OF VET CENTER SERVICES.**

2 In addition to amounts otherwise made available,
3 there are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury
4 not otherwise appropriated for fiscal year 2021,
5 \$50,000,000 for the Department of Veterans Affairs to
6 be used to expand the services provided by Vet Centers,
7 including by establishing additional Vet Centers.

8 **SEC. ____ . FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS RE-**
9 **LATING TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
10 **FAIRS.**

11 In addition to amounts otherwise made available,
12 there are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury
13 not otherwise appropriated for fiscal year 2021—

14 (1) \$500,000,000 to carry out—

15 (A) the Commander John Scott Hannon
16 Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act
17 of 2019 (Public Law 116–171) and the amend-
18 ments made by that Act; and

1 (B) the Veterans COMPACT Act of 2020
2 (Public Law 116–214) and the amendments
3 made by that Act; and

4 (2) \$500,000,000 to carry out the Johnny Isak-
5 son and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care
6 and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (Public Law
7 116–315) and the amendments made by that Act.

8 **SEC. ____ . DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT**
9 **PROGRAM ON DOG TRAINING THERAPY.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Commencing not later than 120
11 days after the date of the enactment of the Act, subject
12 to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary of Vet-
13 erans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which
14 the Secretary shall make grants to one or more appro-
15 priate non-government entities for the purpose of assess-
16 ing the effectiveness of addressing post-deployment mental
17 health and post-traumatic stress disorder (in this section
18 referred to as “PTSD”) symptoms through a therapeutic
19 medium of training service dogs for veterans with disabil-
20 ities.

21 (b) DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot pro-
22 gram required by subsection (a) shall be carried out dur-
23 ing the 5-year period beginning on the date of the com-
24 mencement of the pilot program.

1 (c) CONDITIONS ON RECEIPT OF GRANTS.—As a con-
2 dition of receiving a grant under this section, a non-gov-
3 ernment entity shall—

4 (1) submit to the Secretary certification that
5 the entity is an organization described in section
6 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
7 that—

8 (A) provides service dogs to veterans with
9 PTSD; and

10 (B) is accredited by, or adheres to stand-
11 ards comparable to those of, an accrediting or-
12 ganization with demonstrated experience, na-
13 tional scope, and recognized leadership and ex-
14 pertise in the training of service dogs and edu-
15 cation in the use of service dogs;

16 (2) agree to cover all costs in excess of the
17 grant amount;

18 (3) agree to reaccept or replace the service dog
19 the organization provided to the veteran, if nec-
20 essary, as determined by the organization and the
21 veteran;

22 (4) provide a wellness certification from a li-
23 censed veterinarian for any dog participating in the
24 program;

1 (5) employ at least one person with clinical ex-
2 perience related to mental health;

3 (6) ensure that veterans participating in the
4 pilot program receive training from certified service
5 dog training instructors for a period of time deter-
6 mined appropriate by the organization and the Sec-
7 retary, including service skills to address or alleviate
8 symptoms unique to veterans' needs;

9 (7) agree to provide both lectures on service dog
10 training methodologies and practical hands-on train-
11 ing and grooming of service dogs;

12 (8) agree that in hiring service dog training in-
13 structors to carry out training under the pilot pro-
14 gram, the non-government entity will give a pref-
15 erence to veterans who have successfully graduated
16 from PTSD or other residential treatment program
17 and who have received adequate certification in serv-
18 ice dog training;

19 (9) agree not to use shock collars or prong col-
20 lars as training tools and to use positive reinforce-
21 ment training;

22 (10) agree that upon the conclusion of training
23 provided using the grant funds—

24 (A) the veteran who received the training
25 will keep the dog unless the veteran and the

1 veteran's health provider decide it is not in the
2 best interest of the veteran;

3 (B) if the veteran does not opt to own the
4 dog, the entity will be responsible for caring for
5 and appropriately placing the dog;

6 (C) the Department of Veterans Affairs
7 will have no additional responsibility to provide
8 for any benefits under this section; and

9 (D) the Department of Veterans Affairs
10 will have no liability with respect to the dog;

11 (11) provide follow-up support service for the
12 life of the dog, including a contact plan between the
13 veteran and the entity to allow the veteran to reach
14 out for and receive adequate help with the service
15 dog and the organization to communicate with the
16 veteran to ensure the service dog is being properly
17 cared for; and

18 (12) submit to the Secretary an application
19 containing such information, certification, and assur-
20 ances as the Secretary may require.

21 (d) VETERAN ELIGIBILITY.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—For the purposes of this sec-
23 tion, an eligible veteran is a veteran who—

24 (A) is enrolled in the patient enrollment
25 system in the Department of Veterans Affairs

1 under section 1705 of title 38, United States
2 Code;

3 (B) has been recommended for the pilot
4 program under this section by a qualified health
5 care provider or clinical team based on the med-
6 ical judgment that the veteran may potentially
7 benefit from participating; and

8 (C) agrees to successfully complete train-
9 ing provided by an eligible organization that re-
10 ceives a grant under this section.

11 (2) RELATIONSHIP TO PARTICIPATION IN
12 OTHER PROGRAM.—Veterans may participate in the
13 pilot program in conjunction with the compensated
14 work therapy program of the Department of Vet-
15 erans Affairs.

16 (3) CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT.—
17 To remain eligible to participate in the program, a
18 veteran shall see the health care provider or clinical
19 team of the Department of Veterans Affairs treating
20 the veteran for PTSD at least once every 6 months
21 to determine, based on a clinical evaluation of effi-
22 cacy, whether the veteran continues to benefit from
23 the program.

24 (e) COLLECTION OF DATA.—In carrying out this sec-
25 tion, the Secretary shall—

1 (1) develop metrics and other appropriate
2 means to measure, with respect to veterans partici-
3 pation in the program, the improvement in psycho-
4 social function and therapeutic compliance of such
5 veterans and changes with respect to the dependence
6 on prescription narcotics and psychotropic medica-
7 tion of such veterans;

8 (2) establish processes to document and track
9 the progress of such veterans under the program in
10 terms of the benefits and improvements noted as a
11 result of the program; and

12 (3) in addition, the Secretary shall continue to
13 collect these data over the course of 5 years for each
14 veteran who has continued with the dog he or she
15 has personally trained.

16 (f) GAO BRIEFING AND STUDY.—

17 (1) BRIEFING.—Not later than 1 year after the
18 date of the commencement of the pilot program
19 under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the
20 United States shall provide to the Committees on
21 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives
22 and the Senate a briefing on the methodology estab-
23 lished for the program.

24 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after
25 the date on which the program terminates, the

1 Comptroller General shall submit to the committees
2 specified in paragraph (1) a report on the program.
3 Such report shall include an evaluation of the ap-
4 proach and methodology used for the program with
5 respect to—

6 (A) helping veterans with severe PTSD re-
7 turn to civilian life;

8 (B) relevant metrics, including reduction in
9 metrics such as reduction in scores under the
10 PTSD check-list (PCL-5), improvement in psy-
11 chosocial function, and therapeutic compliance;
12 and

13 (C) reducing the dependence of partici-
14 pants on prescription narcotics and psycho-
15 tropic medication.

16 (g) DEFINITION.—For the purposes of this section,
17 the term “service dog training instructor” means an in-
18 structor who provides the direct training of veterans with
19 PTSD and other post-deployment issues in the art and
20 science of service dog training and handling.

