

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
TO H.R. 2521  
OFFERED BY MR. TAKANO OF CALIFORNIA**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Delivering Optimally  
3 Urgent Labor Access for Veterans Affairs Act of 2021”  
4 or the “DOULA for VA Act of 2021”.

**5 SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM ON DOULA SUPPORT FOR VET-  
6 ERANS.**

7 (a) FEASIBILITY AND ADVISABILITY STUDY.—

8 (1) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
9 shall carry out a study on the feasibility and advis-  
10 ability of conducting the pilot program under sub-  
11 section (b). Such study shall include an analysis  
12 of—

13 (A) measures taken by other Federal,  
14 State, and local entities to ensure the appro-  
15 priate certification of doulas; and

16 (B) the extent to which such measures, or  
17 similar measures, may be adequate for purposes  
18 of such pilot program.

1           (2) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after  
2           the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
3           shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs  
4           of the House of Representatives and the Senate a  
5           report on the findings of the study under paragraph  
6           (1) that shall include—

7                   (A) a determination by the Secretary as to  
8                   whether conducting the pilot program under  
9                   subsection (b) is feasible and advisable; and

10                   (B) if the Secretary determines that the  
11                   conduct of such pilot program is feasible and  
12                   advisable, an implementation plan for such pilot  
13                   program.

14           (b) PILOT PROGRAM.—

15                   (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—If the Secretary submits  
16                   to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House  
17                   of Representatives and the Senate an implementa-  
18                   tion plan under subsection (a)(2)(B), and a period  
19                   of 90 has elapsed following the date on which such  
20                   plan was submitted, the Secretary, by not later than  
21                   one year after such date, shall establish in accord-  
22                   ance with such plan a pilot program to furnish doula  
23                   services to covered veterans through eligible entities  
24                   by expanding the Whole Health model of the De-  
25                   partment of Veterans Affairs, or successor model, to

1       measure the impact that doula support services have  
2       on birth and mental health outcomes of pregnant  
3       veterans (in this subsection referred to as the “pilot  
4       program”).

5           (2) CONSIDERATION.—In carrying out the pilot  
6       program, the Secretary shall consider all types of  
7       doulas, including traditional and community-based  
8       doulas.

9           (3) CONSULTATION.—In designing and imple-  
10      menting the pilot program, the Secretary shall con-  
11      sult with stakeholders, including—

12           (A) organizations representing veterans,  
13      including veterans that are disproportionately  
14      impacted by poor maternal health outcomes;

15           (B) community-based health care profes-  
16      sionals, including doulas, and other stake-  
17      holders; and

18           (C) experts in promoting health equity and  
19      combating racial bias in health care settings.

20           (4) GOALS.—The goals of the pilot program are  
21      the following:

22           (A) To improve maternal, mental health,  
23      and infant care outcomes.

1 (B) To improve integration of doula sup-  
2 port services into the Whole Health model of  
3 the Department, or successor model.

4 (C) To improve the experience of women  
5 receiving maternity care from the Department,  
6 including by increasing the ability of a woman  
7 to develop and follow her own birthing plan.

8 (D) To re-engage veterans with the De-  
9 partment after giving birth.

10 (5) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out  
11 the pilot program in—

12 (A) the three Veterans Integrated Service  
13 Networks of the Department that have the  
14 highest percentage of female veterans enrolled  
15 in the patient enrollment system of the Depart-  
16 ment established and operated under section  
17 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, com-  
18 pared to the total number of enrolled veterans  
19 in such Network; and

20 (B) the three Veterans Integrated Service  
21 Networks that have the lowest percentage of fe-  
22 male veterans enrolled in such patient enroll-  
23 ment system, compared to the total number of  
24 enrolled veterans in such Network.

1           (6) OPEN PARTICIPATION.—The Secretary shall  
2 authorize for participation in the pilot program any  
3 eligible entity or covered veteran that elects to par-  
4 ticipate in the pilot program.

5           (7) SERVICES PROVIDED.—

6           (A) IN GENERAL.—Under the pilot pro-  
7 gram, a covered veteran shall receive not more  
8 than 10 sessions of care from a doula under the  
9 Whole Health model of the Department, or suc-  
10 cessor model, under which a doula works as an  
11 advocate for the veteran alongside the medical  
12 team for the veteran.

13           (B) SESSIONS.—Sessions covered under  
14 subparagraph (A) shall be as follows:

15           (i) Three or four sessions before labor  
16 and delivery.

17           (ii) One session during labor and de-  
18 livery.

19           (iii) Three or four sessions post-  
20 partum, which may be conducted via the  
21 mobile application for VA Video Connect.

22           (8) ADMINISTRATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—

23           (A) IN GENERAL.—The Office of Women's  
24 Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs,  
25 or successor office, shall—

1 (i) coordinate services and activities  
2 under the pilot program;

3 (ii) oversee the administration of the  
4 pilot program; and

5 (iii) conduct onsite assessments of  
6 medical facilities of the Department that  
7 are participating in the pilot program.

8 (B) GUIDELINES FOR VETERAN-SPECIFIC  
9 CARE.—The Office shall establish guidelines  
10 under the pilot program for training doulas on  
11 military sexual trauma and post traumatic  
12 stress disorder.

13 (C) MATERNITY CARE COORDINATORS.—  
14 The Maternity Care Coordinator for a covered  
15 veteran shall be responsible for coordinating the  
16 doula services furnished to the covered veteran  
17 under the pilot program.

18 (D) AMOUNTS FOR CARE.—The Office may  
19 recommend to the Secretary appropriate pay-  
20 ment amounts for care and services provided  
21 under the pilot program, which shall not exceed  
22 \$3,500 per doula per veteran.

23 (9) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary  
24 shall establish a process to provide technical assist-

1           ance to eligible entities and doulas participating in  
2           the pilot program.

3           (10) DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The Sec-  
4           retary shall conduct the pilot program for a period  
5           of five years.

6           (11) REPORT.—

7           (A) SUBMISSION.—Not later than one year  
8           after the date on which the pilot program is es-  
9           tablished, and annually thereafter for each year  
10          in which the pilot program is carried out, the  
11          Secretary shall submit to the Committees on  
12          Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representa-  
13          tives and the Senate a report on such pilot pro-  
14          gram.

15          (B) FINAL REPORT.—As part of the final  
16          report submitted under subparagraph (A), the  
17          Secretary shall include recommendations on  
18          whether the model studied in the pilot program  
19          should be continued or more widely adopted by  
20          the Department.

21          (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22           (1) The term “covered veteran” means a preg-  
23          nant veteran or a formerly pregnant veteran (with  
24          respect to sessions post-partum) who is enrolled in  
25          the patient enrollment system of the Department of

1 Veterans Affairs under section 1705 of title 38,  
2 United States Code.

3 (2) The term “eligible entity” means an entity  
4 that provides medically accurate, comprehensive ma-  
5 ternity services to covered veterans under the laws  
6 administered by the Secretary, including under the  
7 Veterans Community Care Program under section  
8 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

9 (3) The term “VA Video Connect” means the  
10 program of the Department of Veterans Affairs  
11 under which a veteran may be connected with the  
12 health care team of the veteran from any location,  
13 using encryption to ensure a secure and private ses-  
14 sion.

