

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
TO H.R. 984  
OFFERED BY MR. BOST OF ILLINOIS**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Commitment to Vet-  
3 eran Support and Outreach Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AF-**  
5 **FAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES AND IN-**  
6 **DIAN TRIBES TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO**  
7 **VETERANS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United  
9 States Code, is amended—

10 (1) by redesignating sections 6307 and 6308  
11 and sections 6308 and 6309, respectively; and

12 (2) by inserting after section 6306 the following  
13 new section 6307:

14 **“§ 6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to im-**  
15 **prove outreach to veterans**

16 “(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to  
17 provide for assistance by the Secretary to States and In-  
18 dian Tribes to carry out programs that—

1           “(1) improve outreach and assistance to vet-  
2           erans and the spouses, children, and parents of vet-  
3           erans, to ensure that such individuals are fully in-  
4           formed about any veterans and veterans-related ben-  
5           efits and programs (including veterans programs of  
6           a State or Indian Tribe) for which they may be eligi-  
7           ble; and

8           “(2) facilitate opportunities for such individuals  
9           to receive competent, qualified services in the prepa-  
10          ration, presentation, and prosecution of veterans  
11          benefits claims.

12          “(b) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary may award grants  
13          under this section to States and Indian Tribes—

14               “(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or other-  
15               wise enhance covered outreach activities;

16               “(2) to increase the number of county or Tribal  
17               veterans service officers serving in the State or In-  
18               dian Tribe by hiring new, additional such officers; or

19               “(3) to expand, carry out, coordinate, improve,  
20               or otherwise enhance existing programs, activities,  
21               and services of the existing organization of the State  
22               or Indian Tribe that has been recognized by the De-  
23               partment of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section  
24               5902, in the preparation, presentation, and prosecu-  
25               tion of claims for veterans benefits through rep-

1       representatives who hold positions as county or Tribal  
2       veterans service officers.

3       “(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant  
4       under this section, a State or Indian Tribe shall submit  
5       to the Secretary an application at such time, in such man-  
6       ner, and containing such information as the Secretary may  
7       require.

8       “(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1)  
9       shall include the following:

10           “(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

11           “(B) A description of the programs through  
12       which the State or Indian Tribe will meet the out-  
13       come measures developed by the Secretary under  
14       subsection (j).

15           “(C) A description of how the State or Indian  
16       Tribe will distribute grant amounts equitably among  
17       counties (or Tribal lands, as the case may be) with  
18       varying levels of urbanization.

19           “(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to  
20       meet the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska  
21       Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans,  
22       and veterans from other underserved communities.

23       “(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to en-  
24       sure that grants awarded under this section are equitably

1 distributed among States and Indian Tribes with varying  
2 levels of urbanization.

3 “(e) SET-ASIDE.—Of the amounts authorized to be  
4 appropriated or otherwise made available for grants under  
5 this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall ensure  
6 that not less than five percent is used to make grants to  
7 Indian tribes.

8 “(f) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize  
9 awarding grants under this section that will serve the fol-  
10 lowing areas:

11 “(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or  
12 Tribal veterans service officers.

13 “(2) Areas with high rates of—

14 “(A) suicide among veterans; or

15 “(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

16 “(g) USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERV-  
17 ICE OFFICERS.—A State or Indian Tribe that receives a  
18 grant under this section to carry out an activity described  
19 in subsection (b)(1) may only carry out the activity  
20 through—

21 “(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer  
22 of the State or Indian Tribe; or

23 “(2) if the State or Indian Tribe does not have  
24 a county or Tribal veterans service officer, or if the  
25 county or Tribal veterans service officers of the

1 State or Indian Tribe cover only a portion of that  
2 State or Indian Tribe, an appropriate entity of a  
3 State, local, or Tribal government, as determined by  
4 the Secretary.

5 “(h) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant awarded  
6 under this section shall be used—

7 “(1) to expand existing programs, activities,  
8 and services;

9 “(2) to hire and maintain new, additional coun-  
10 ty or Tribal veterans service officers; or

11 “(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate  
12 carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

13 “(i) OTHER PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—A grant  
14 under this section may be used to provide education and  
15 training, including on-the-job training, for State, county,  
16 local, and Tribal government employees who provide (or  
17 when trained will provide) veterans covered outreach serv-  
18 ices in order for those employees to obtain and maintain  
19 accreditation in accordance with procedures approved by  
20 the Secretary.

21 “(j) OUTCOME MEASURES.—(1) The Secretary shall  
22 develop and provide to each State or Indian Tribe that  
23 receives a grant under this section written guidance on  
24 the following:

25 “(A) Outcome measures.

1           “(B) Policies of the Department.

2           “(2) In developing outcome measures under para-  
3 graph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

4           “(A) Increasing the use of veterans and vet-  
5 erans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable  
6 populations.

7           “(B) Increasing the number of county and  
8 Tribal veterans service officers recognized by the  
9 Secretary for the representation of veterans under  
10 chapter 59 of this title.

11          “(k) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) With respect  
12 to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary  
13 shall track the use of veterans benefits among the popu-  
14 lation served by the grant, including the average period  
15 of time between the date on which a veteran or other eligi-  
16 ble claimant applies for such a benefit and the date on  
17 which the veteran or other eligible claimant receives the  
18 benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

19          “(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life  
20 of the grant program established under this section, the  
21 Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

22           “(A) the information tracked under paragraph  
23 (1);

24           “(B) how the grants awarded under this section  
25 serve the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska

1 Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans,  
2 and veterans from other underserved communities;  
3 and

4 “(C) other information provided by States and  
5 Indian Tribes pursuant to the grant reporting re-  
6 quirements.

7 “(1) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—(1) The Secretary  
8 shall—

9 “(A) review the performance of each State or  
10 Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this sec-  
11 tion; and

12 “(B) make information regarding such perform-  
13 ance publicly available.

14 “(m) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a  
15 State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this sec-  
16 tion and does not meet the outcome measures developed  
17 by the Secretary under subsection (j), the Secretary shall  
18 require the State or Indian Tribe to submit a remediation  
19 plan under which the State or Indian Tribe shall describe  
20 how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

21 “(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent  
22 grant under this section to a State or Indian Tribe de-  
23 scribed in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the  
24 remediation plan submitted by the State of Indian Tribe.

1       “(n) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant  
2 awarded under this section may not exceed 10 percent of  
3 amounts made available for grants under this section for  
4 the fiscal year in which the grant is awarded.

5       “(o) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Any grant  
6 awarded under this section shall be used to supplement  
7 and not supplant State and local funding that is otherwise  
8 available.

9       “(p) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10           “(1) The term ‘county or Tribal veterans serv-  
11 ice officer’ includes a local equivalent veterans serv-  
12 ice officer.

13           “(2) The term ‘covered outreach’ means out-  
14 reach with respect to—

15                   “(A) benefits administered by the Under  
16 Secretary for Benefits; or

17                   “(B) similar benefits administered by a  
18 State or Indian Tribe.

19           “(3) The term ‘Indian Tribe’ has the meaning  
20 given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-De-  
21 termination and Education Assistance Act (25  
22 U.S.C. 5304).

23           “(4) The term ‘State’ includes the District of  
24 Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the

1 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,  
2 and any territory or possession of the United States.

3 “(5) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the  
4 toll-free hotline for veterans established under sec-  
5 tion 1720F(h) of this title.”.

6 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
7 at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended  
8 by striking the items relating to sections 6307 and 6308  
9 and inserting the following new items:

“6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans.

“6308. Outreach for eligible dependents.

“6309. Biennial report to Congress.”.

10 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
11 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans  
12 Affairs for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028,  
13 \$20,000,000 to carry out section 6307 of title 38, United  
14 States Code, as added by subsection (a).

15 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME  
16 EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEE.—During fiscal years 2024  
17 through 2028, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may hire  
18 two or more additional full-time equivalent employees in  
19 the Office of the General Counsel of the Department of  
20 Veterans Affairs, as compared to the number of full-time  
21 equivalent employees that would otherwise be authorized  
22 for such office, to carry out duties under the accreditation,  
23 discipline, and fees program.

1 (e) NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY.—Not later  
2 than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act,  
3 the Secretary shall issue a notice of funding availability  
4 for grants available under section 6307 of title 38, United  
5 States Code, as added by subsection (a).

6 **SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**  
7 **FAIRS LOAN FEES.**

8 The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38,  
9 United States Code, is amended by striking “November  
10 14, 2031” each place it appears and inserting “December  
11 26, 2031”.

