

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

TO H.R. 7342

OFFERED BY Mr. Bost

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Accessibility
3 Advisory Committee Act of 2024”.

4 **SEC. 2. VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL AC-
5 CESS.**

6 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.—**

7 (1) **IN GENERAL.—**Not later than 180 days
8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
9 retary of Veterans Affairs shall establish within the
10 Department of Veterans Affairs an advisory com-
11 mittee on matters relating to accessibility of the De-
12 partment for individuals with disabilities.

13 (2) **DESIGNATION.—**The advisory committee es-
14 tablished by paragraph (1) shall be known as the
15 “Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access” (in
16 this section the “Advisory Committee”).

17 (b) **MEMBERSHIP.—**

1 (1) VOTING MEMBERS.—The Advisory Com-
2 mittee shall be composed of 15 voting members, ap-
3 pointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. In ap-
4 pointing such members, the Secretary shall ensure
5 the following:

6 (A) Four are veterans with disabilities, in-
7 cluding mobility impairment, hearing, visual,
8 and mental or cognitive disabilities.

9 (B) Four are experts on issues described in
10 subsection (f)(1)(A) or the provisions of law set
11 forth under subsection (f)(1)(B).

12 (C) Two are employees of the Department,
13 one from the Section 508 Office and one from
14 the Architectural Accessibility Program, who
15 oversee the compliance of the Department with
16 Federal accessibility laws.

17 (D) Five are representatives nominated by
18 national veterans service organizations that ad-
19 vocate for veterans with physical, sensory, men-
20 tal, or cognitive disabilities.

21 (2) EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.—The Advisory
22 Committee shall also include four ex officio members
23 (or their designees):

24 (A) The Under Secretary for Health.

25 (B) The Under Secretary for Benefits.

1 (C) The Under Secretary for Memorial Af-
2 fairs.

3 (D) The chairperson of the Architectural
4 and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
5 (known as the "Access Board").

6 (c) TERMS; VACANCIES.—

7 (1) TERMS.—A member of the Advisory Com-
8 mittee shall be appointed for a term of two years.
9 The Secretary may reappoint members to the Advi-
10 sory Committee for such additional two-year terms
11 as the Secretary determines appropriate.

12 (2) VACANCIES.—The Secretary shall fill a va-
13 cancy in the Advisory Committee in the same man-
14 ner as the original appointment not later than 180
15 days after such vacancy occurs.

16 (d) MEETINGS.—

17 (1) FREQUENCY.—The Advisory Committee
18 shall meet not less frequently than twice each year.

19 (2) SUBCOMMITTEES.—The Advisory Com-
20 mittee may form subcommittees, which shall meet as
21 often as required.

22 (3) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of
23 the Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum.

24 (e) CHAIRPERSON.—Members of the Advisory Com-
25 mittee shall select a Chairperson from among the members

1 of the Advisory Committee. If the position of Chairperson
2 becomes vacant, the members of the Advisory Committee
3 shall select a new Chairperson not later than 30 days after
4 the date on which the position became vacant.

5 (f) DUTIES.—

6 (1) REQUIREMENT TO CONSULT AND SEEK AD-
7 VICE.—On a regular basis, the Secretary shall con-
8 sult with and seek the advice of the Advisory Com-
9 mittee—

10 (A) on improving the accessibility of the
11 Department for individuals with disabilities, in-
12 cluding improving—

13 (i) the accessibility of information of
14 the Department, including electronic infor-
15 mation;

16 (ii) the accessibility of the services
17 and benefits furnished by the Department;

18 (iii) the accessibility of the facilities of
19 the Department;

20 (iv) the accessibility of facilities of
21 health care providers furnishing care or
22 services under the Veterans Community
23 Care Program under section 1703 of title
24 38, United States Code; and

1 (v) the acquisition process of the De-
2 partment to ensure that products and serv-
3 ices, including information technology and
4 information and communication technology
5 (as defined in the standards issued by the
6 Architectural and Transportation Barriers
7 Compliance Board pursuant to section 508
8 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29
9 U.S.C. 794d)), are accessible when pur-
10 chased; and

11 (B) for ensuring the compliance of the De-
12 partment with provisions of law relating to dis-
13 ability and accessibility, including—

14 (i) the Americans with Disabilities Act
15 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12184 et seq.);

16 (ii) sections 504 and 508 of the Reha-
17 bilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791,
18 794, and 794d);

19 (iii) the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5
20 U.S.C. 301 note);

21 (iv) the 21st Century Integrated Dig-
22 ital Experience Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 note);

23 (v) the Architectural Barriers Act of
24 1968 (Public Law 90-480); and

1 (vi) such other provisions of Federal
2 law as may be that ensure equal access to
3 Federal facilities, benefits, or services for
4 individuals with disabilities.

5 (2) PROVISION OF ADVICE.—In providing ad-
6 vice to the Secretary, the Advisory Committee shall,
7 focusing on the areas of greatest need for the De-
8 partment—

9 (A) assess the disability access needs of
10 veterans, the public, and Department employees
11 for full access to the Department's information,
12 services, and benefits by reviewing relevant in-
13 formation, such as filed complaints by people
14 with disabilities or physical assessments of the
15 Department's facilities;

16 (B) provide assessments of accessibility at
17 the Department and the compliance of the De-
18 partment with applicable provisions of law re-
19 lating to disability and accessibility; and

20 (C) provide advice on improving accessi-
21 bility at the Department, including the accessi-
22 bility of all—

23 (i) communications, including internal
24 and public facing;

25 (ii) services and benefits; and

1 (iii) facilities.

2 (3) REPORTS.—

3 (A) REPORTS TO THE SECRETARY.—Not
4 later than two years after the date of the first
5 meeting of the Advisory Committee, and not
6 less frequently than once every two years there-
7 after, the Advisory Committee shall submit to
8 the Secretary a report that, focusing on areas
9 of greatest need for the Department—

10 (i) identifies and assesses access bar-
11 riers affecting veterans, the public, and
12 employees of the Department;

13 (ii) determines the extent to which the
14 programs and activities of the Department
15 address the barriers identified in clause (i),
16 including compliance of the Department
17 with provisions of law relating to accessi-
18 bility law and reporting;

19 (iii) provides recommendations and
20 access priorities to improve the accessi-
21 bility of the Department's services, bene-
22 fits, information, technology, and facilities;

23 (iv) provides a description of access
24 improvements and assesses the Depart-
25 ment's implementation of recommendations

1 from previous reports of the Advisory
2 Committee, including any unmet rec-
3 ommendations that remain necessary for
4 improving accessibility for the Department;
5 and

6 (v) provides any recommendations for
7 legislation, administrative action, or other
8 actions that the Advisory Committee deter-
9 mines appropriate.

10 (B) REPORTS TO CONGRESS AND FEDERAL
11 AGENCIES.—

12 (i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90
13 days after the receipt of a report required
14 under subparagraph (A), the Secretary
15 shall submit to the appropriate congres-
16 sional committees a copy of such report
17 and any comments and recommendations
18 of the Secretary concerning such report
19 that the Secretary determines appropriate.

20 (ii) AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC.—
21 The Secretary shall publish on a publicly
22 accessible website of the Department such
23 report and such comments and rec-
24 ommendations as may have been submitted
25 along with such report.

1 (iii) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL
2 COMMITTEES.—In this subparagraph, the
3 term “appropriate congressional commit-
4 tees” means—

5 (I) the Committees on Veterans’
6 Affairs of the Senate and House of
7 Representatives;

8 (II) the Special Committee on
9 Aging of the Senate; and

10 (III) the Committee on Edu-
11 cation and the Workforce of the
12 House of Representatives.

13 (g) ADVISORY COMMITTEE PERSONNEL AND RE-
14 SOURCE MATTERS.—

15 (1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—A member
16 of the Commission who is not an officer or employee
17 of the Federal Government shall not be compensated
18 for the performance of the duties of the Advisory
19 Committee.

20 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Ad-
21 visory Committee shall be allowed travel expenses,
22 including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates
23 authorized for employees of agencies under sub-
24 chapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States
25 Code, while away from their homes or regular places

1 of business in the performance of services for the
2 Advisory Committee.

3 (3) RESOURCES.—The Secretary shall ensure
4 that such personnel, funding, and other resources
5 are made available to the Advisory Committee as the
6 Secretary determines appropriate to carry out the
7 duties of the Advisory Committee.

8 (4) INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall furnish
9 to the Advisory Committee such information as the
10 Advisory Committee may request from the Sec-
11 retary, subject to applicable provisions of law.

12 (h) TERMINATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The
13 Advisory Committee shall terminate on the date that is
14 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

15 **SEC. 3. ABOLITION OF INACTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

16 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
17 ment of this Act and before establishing the Veterans Ad-
18 visory Committee on Equal Access under section 2, the
19 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

20 (1) abolish an advisory committee of the De-
21 partment of Veterans Affairs that—

22 (A) was not established by an Act of Con-
23 gress; and

24 (B) is inactive;

1 (2) consolidate two advisory committees de-
2 scribed in paragraph (1); or

3 (3) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-
4 fairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a
5 recommendation to abolish an advisory committee of
6 the Department that—

7 (A) was established by an Act of Congress;

8 and

9 (B) is inactive.

10 **SEC. 4. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.**

11 The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38,
12 United States Code, is amended by striking “November
13 15, 2031” each place it appears and inserting “November
14 29, 2031”.

