



(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on mental health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs in certain States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PHILLIPS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on mental health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs in certain States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Vet Center Support
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ASSESSMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE FUR-**
2 **NISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
3 **AFFAIRS IN CERTAIN STATES.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
6 erans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans'
7 Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives
8 a report regarding mental health care furnished by the
9 Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans in each cov-
10 ered State.

11 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report under subsection (a)
12 shall include, with respect to covered States, the following:

13 (1) An assessment of the ability of the Depart-
14 ment to furnish to veterans—

15 (A) readjustment counseling;

16 (B) therapy for post-traumatic stress dis-
17 order and other trauma-related therapy;

18 (C) group counseling;

19 (D) marriage and family counseling;

20 (E) military sexual trauma counseling;

21 (F) bereavement counseling;

22 (G) screenings and referrals for medical
23 issues;

24 (H) substance abuse assessments and re-
25 ferrals;

1 (I) employment assessments and referrals;
2 and

3 (J) explanations and referrals regarding
4 benefits furnished through the Veterans Bene-
5 fits Administration of the Department.

6 (2) An assessment of the feasibility of estab-
7 lishing additional Vet Centers.

8 (3) An assessment of the feasibility of increas-
9 ing staff at existing Vet Centers to ensure com-
10 prehensive coverage, including with respect to bar-
11 riers regarding—

12 (A) demonstrating a need for additional
13 Vet Centers, mobile Vet Centers, and commu-
14 nity access points;

15 (B) including drive time as a measure of
16 productivity while conducting outreach to un-
17 derserved areas; and

18 (C) building a new Vet Center.

19 (4) An analysis of staffing shortages at Vet
20 Centers, including delays in approving and proc-
21 essing new hires.

22 (5) An outreach strategy for using mobile Vet
23 Centers, Vet Center outstations, and community ac-
24 cess points to ensure that mental health care serv-
25 ices reach veterans in underserved areas.

1 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) COVERED STATE.—The term “covered
3 State” means each State (including the District of
4 Columbia, Puerto Rico, and any territory or posses-
5 sion of the United States) that has a ratio of one
6 Vet Center per 100,000 or more veterans who reside
7 in such State (as such population is determined by
8 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through
9 the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Sta-
10 tistics, for fiscal year 2021).

11 (2) VET CENTER.—The term “Vet Center” has
12 the meaning given that term in section 1712A of
13 title 38, United States Code, including with respect
14 to Vet Center outstations, but not including mobile
15 Vet Centers.