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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to provide mental and behavioral health support to friends and families of veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to provide mental and behavioral health support to friends and families of veterans, and for other purposes.

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 “VA Coaching into Care
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM: MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL**
2 **HEALTH HOTLINE FOR FRIENDS AND FAMI-**
3 **LIES OF VETERANS.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than one year after
5 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
6 Veterans Affairs shall establish a pilot program (in this
7 section referred to as the “Program”) to maintain a toll-
8 free hotline to provide access to licensed mental and be-
9 havioral health support providers to eligible recipients.

10 (b) PROVIDERS.—In carrying out the Program, the
11 Secretary shall ensure that—

12 (1) the hotline is staffed by psychologists and
13 social workers who are—

14 (A) employees of the Department of Vet-
15 erans Affairs; and

16 (B) hired by the Secretary for the Pro-
17 gram; and

18 (2) such employees provide to eligible recipi-
19 ents—

20 (A) advice on how to discuss mental and
21 behavioral health with a veteran; and

22 (B) appropriate referrals to programs of
23 the Department or to non-Department entities
24 that provide mental health services or re-
25 sources.

26 (c) OUTREACH.—

1 (1) SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS.—Not later than
2 60 days after the Secretary establishes the Program,
3 the Secretary shall provide information on the serv-
4 ices available through the Program to—

5 (A) veterans service organizations; and

6 (B) other organizations that serve vet-
7 erans, family members of veterans, or care-
8 givers of veterans, that the Secretary deter-
9 mines appropriate.

10 (2) MATERIALS; WEBSITE.—Not later than 90
11 days after the Secretary establishes the Program,
12 the Secretary shall—

13 (A) furnish, in each Vet Center or medical
14 facility of the Department, promotional flyers,
15 brochures, and posters that provide information
16 on the services available through the Program;
17 and

18 (B) promote the Program on a publicly ac-
19 cessible website of the Department and in other
20 outreach campaigns and activities conducted by
21 the Secretary.

22 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the Pro-
23 gram terminates under subsection (e), the Secretary shall
24 submit to the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the Sen-

1 ate and House of Representatives a report on the results
2 of the Program. Elements of such report shall include—

3 (1) with respect to calls received through the
4 hotline—

5 (A) the number of such calls;

6 (B) the average time for such employees to
7 answer such calls; and

8 (C) the average duration of such calls;

9 (2) with respect to referrals provided under
10 subsection (b)—

11 (A) the types of such referrals; and

12 (B) the number of such referrals;

13 (3) a summary of the actions taken by the Sec-
14 retary to comply with the requirements of subsection
15 (c); and

16 (4) recommendations of the Secretary regard-
17 ing—

18 (A) whether continuing or expanding the
19 Program is feasible and advisable; and

20 (B) any additional or modified authorities
21 or resources required to conduct or expand the
22 program.

23 (e) TERMINATION.—The Program shall terminate
24 three years after the day on which the Secretary estab-
25 lishes the Program.

1 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) The term “eligible recipient” means, with
3 respect to a veteran, any of the following:

4 (A) A family member.

5 (B) An individual who resides with a vet-
6 eran.

7 (C) A friend.

8 (2) The term “family member” includes the fol-
9 lowing:

10 (A) A spouse.

11 (B) A parent.

12 (C) A dependent.

13 (D) A sibling.

14 (3) The term “Vet Center” has the meaning
15 given such term in section 1712A of title 38, United
16 States Code.

17 (4) The term “veterans service organization”
18 means an organization recognized under section
19 5902 of title 38, United States Code.