

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1753

To ensure that certain members of the Armed Forces who served in female cultural support teams receive proper credit for such service.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 23, 2023

Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia, Mr. CROW, and Ms. HOULAHAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To ensure that certain members of the Armed Forces who served in female cultural support teams receive proper credit for such service.

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. CREDIT FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE**
4 **ARMED FORCES WHO SERVED IN FEMALE**
5 **CULTURAL SUPPORT TEAMS.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

7 (1) In 2010, the Commander of United States
8 Special Operations Command established the Cul-

1 tural Support Team Program to overcome signifi-
2 cant intelligence gaps during the Global War on Ter-
3 ror.

4 (2) From 2010 through 2021, approximately
5 310 female members, from every Armed Force,
6 passed and were selected as members of female cul-
7 tural support teams, and deployed with special oper-
8 ations forces.

9 (3) Members of female cultural support teams
10 served honorably, demonstrated commendable cour-
11 age, overcame such intelligence gaps, engaged in di-
12 rect action, and suffered casualties during the Glob-
13 al War on Terror.

14 (4) The Federal Government has a duty to rec-
15 ognize members and veterans of female cultural sup-
16 port teams who volunteered join the Armed Forces,
17 to undergo arduous training for covered service, and
18 to execute dangerous and classified missions in the
19 course of such covered service.

20 (5) Members who performed covered service
21 have sought treatment from the Department of Vet-
22 erans Affairs for traumatic brain injuries, post-trau-
23 matic stress, and disabling physical trauma incurred
24 in the course of such covered service, but have been
25 denied such care.

1 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the Sense of Con-
2 gress that individuals who performed covered service per-
3 formed exceptional service to the United States.

4 (c) MILITARY SERVICE: RECORDS; CALCULATION OF
5 RETIRED PAY.—Not later than one year after the date
6 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall
7 ensure that the performance of covered service is included
8 in—

9 (1) the military service record of each individual
10 who performed covered service; and

11 (2) the computation of retired pay for each in-
12 dividual who performed covered service.

13 (d) CLAIMS FOR VETERANS BENEFITS ARISING
14 FROM COVERED SERVICE.—

15 (1) DETERMINATION OF SERVICE CONNEC-
16 TION.—Upon the filing of a claim by an individual
17 described in paragraph (3)(C) for service-connected
18 disability or death incurred or aggravated in the
19 course of covered service, the Secretary of Veterans
20 Affairs shall determine whether such disability or
21 death was service-connected.

22 (2) TREATMENT OF COVERED SERVICE.—In the
23 consideration of a claim under this subsection, the
24 Secretary shall treat covered service as engagement

1 in combat with the enemy in the course of active
2 military, naval, air, or space service.

3 (3) EFFECTIVE DATE OF AWARD.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by
5 subparagraph (B), the effective date of an
6 award under this subsection shall be determined
7 in accordance with section 5110 of title 38,
8 United States Code.

9 (B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding sub-
10 section (g) of such section, the Secretary shall
11 determine the effective date of an award based
12 on a claim under this subsection for an indi-
13 vidual described in subparagraph (C) by treat-
14 ing the date on which the individual filed the
15 initial claim specified in clause (i) of such sub-
16 paragraph as the date on which the individual
17 filed the claim so awarded under this section.

18 (C) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—An indi-
19 vidual described in this subparagraph is an in-
20 dividual who performed covered service, or a
21 survivor of such an individual—

22 (i) who, before the date of the enact-
23 ment of this Act, submitted a claim for
24 service-connected disability or death of
25 such individual;

1 (ii) whose such claim was denied by
2 reason of the claim not establishing that
3 the disability or death was service-con-
4 nected;

5 (iii) who submits a claim during the
6 period of three years beginning on the date
7 of the enactment of this Act, for the same
8 condition covered by the prior claim under
9 clause; and

10 (iv) whose such claim is approved pur-
11 suant to this subsection.

12 (4) PROCESSING OF CLAIMS.—The Secretary of
13 Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary
14 of Defense, shall improve training and guidance for
15 employees who may process a claim under this sub-
16 section.

17 (5) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall conduct
18 outreach to inform individuals who performed cov-
19 ered service (and survivors of such individuals) that
20 they may submit supplemental claims for service-
21 connected disability or death incurred or aggravated
22 in the course of covered service. Such outreach shall
23 include the following:

24 (A) The Secretary shall publish on the
25 internet website of the Department a notice

1 that such individuals may elect to file a supple-
2 mental claim.

3 (B) The Secretary shall notify, in writing
4 or by electronic means, veterans service organi-
5 zations of the ability of such individuals to file
6 a supplemental claim.

7 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 (1) The term “covered service” means service—

9 (A) as a member of the Armed Forces;

10 (B) in a female cultural support team;

11 (C) with the personnel development skill
12 identifier of R2J or 5DK; and

13 (D) during the period beginning on Janu-
14 ary 1, 2010, and ending on August 31, 2021.

15 (2) The terms “active military, naval, air, or
16 space service” and “service-connected” have the
17 meanings given such terms in section 101 of title 38,
18 United States Code.

19 (3) The term “Secretary concerned” has the
20 meaning given such term in section 101 of title 10,
21 United States Code.

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