

**Suspend the Rules And Pass the Bill, S. 114, with Amendments**

**(The amendments strike all after the enacting clause and insert a new text and a new title)**

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 114

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 26, 2017

Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## AN ACT

To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

2 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
3 “VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017”.

4 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for  
5 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—APPROPRIATION OF AMOUNTS FOR VETERANS CHOICE  
PROGRAM

Sec. 101. Appropriation of amounts for Veterans Choice Program.

TITLE II—PERSONNEL MATTERS

Sec. 201. Modification to annual determination of staffing shortages in Vet-  
erans Health Administration.

Sec. 202. Establishment of Department of Veterans Affairs Executive Manage-  
ment Fellowship Program.

Sec. 203. Accountability of leaders for managing the Department of Veterans  
Affairs.

Sec. 204. Reemployment of former employees at Department of Veterans Af-  
fairs.

Sec. 205. Promotional opportunities for technical experts at Department of  
Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 206. Employment of students and recent graduates by Department of Vet-  
erans Affairs.

Sec. 207. Encouragement of transition of military medical professionals into  
employment with Veterans Health Administration.

Sec. 208. Recruiting database at Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 209. Training for human resources professionals of Veterans Health Ad-  
ministration on recruitment and retention.

Sec. 210. Plan to hire directors of medical centers of Department of Veterans  
Affairs.

Sec. 211. Exit surveys at Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 212. Requirement that physician assistants employed by the Department  
of Veterans Affairs receive competitive pay.

Sec. 213. Expansion of direct-hiring authority for Department of Veterans Af-  
fairs in case of shortage of highly qualified candidates.

Sec. 214. Comptroller General of the United States assessment of succession  
planning at Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE III—MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES

Sec. 301. Authorization of certain major medical facility leases of the Depart-  
ment of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 302. Authorization of appropriations for medical facility leases.

TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 401. Extension of reduction in amount of pension furnished by Department of Veterans Affairs for certain veterans covered by medicaid plans for services furnished by nursing facilities.

Sec. 402. Extension of requirement for collection of fees for housing loans guaranteed by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 403. Extension of authority to use income information.

1 **TITLE I—APPROPRIATION OF**  
2 **AMOUNTS FOR VETERANS**  
3 **CHOICE PROGRAM**

4 **SEC. 101. APPROPRIATION OF AMOUNTS FOR VETERANS**  
5 **CHOICE PROGRAM.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-  
7 priated, and is appropriated, to the Secretary of Veterans  
8 Affairs, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise  
9 appropriated, \$2,100,000,000 to be deposited in the Vet-  
10 erans Choice Fund under section 802 of the Veterans Ac-  
11 cess, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law  
12 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

13 (b) AVAILABILITY.—The amount appropriated under  
14 subsection (a) shall remain available until expended.

15 **TITLE II—PERSONNEL MATTERS**

16 **SEC. 201. MODIFICATION TO ANNUAL DETERMINATION OF**  
17 **STAFFING SHORTAGES IN VETERANS HEALTH**  
18 **ADMINISTRATION.**

19 Section 7412(a) of title 38, United States Code, is  
20 amended—

1 (1) by striking “the five occupations” and in-  
2 sserting “at a minimum, the five clinical occupations  
3 and the five nonclinical occupations”; and

4 (2) by striking “throughout the Department”  
5 and inserting “with respect to each medical center of  
6 the Department,”.

7 **SEC. 202. ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**

8 **AFFAIRS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT FELLOW-**

9 **SHIP PROGRAM.**

10 (a) FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.—Chapter 7 of title 38,  
11 United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the  
12 following new subchapter:

13 “SUBCHAPTER III—EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT  
14 FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

15 “§ 741. **Executive Management Fellowship Program**

16 “(a) FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.—There is in the De-  
17 partment an Executive Management Fellowship Program.  
18 The purpose of the program shall be to provide—

19 “(1) eligible employees of the Veterans Benefits  
20 Administration and the Veterans Health Administra-  
21 tion with training and experience in the private sec-  
22 tor; and

23 “(2) eligible employees of a private-sector entity  
24 with training and experience in the Department of  
25 Veterans Affairs.

1       “(b) FELLOWSHIP.—(1) A fellowship provided under  
2 this section is a 1-year fellowship during which—

3           “(A) with respect to a Department participant,  
4 the participant receives training and experience at a  
5 private-sector entity that is engaged in the adminis-  
6 tration and delivery of health care or other services  
7 similar to the benefits administered by the Sec-  
8 retary; and

9           “(B) with respect to a private-sector partici-  
10 pant, the participant receives training and experi-  
11 ence at the Veterans Benefits Administration or the  
12 Veterans Health Administration.

13       “(2) The Secretary shall enter into such agreements  
14 with private-sector entities as are necessary to carry out  
15 this section.

16       “(c) SELECTION OF RECIPIENTS.—(1) In August of  
17 each year, the Secretary shall select—

18           “(A) not fewer than 18 and not more than 30  
19 eligible employees of the Veterans Benefits Adminis-  
20 tration and the Veterans Health Administration to  
21 receive a fellowship under this section; and

22           “(B) not fewer than 18 and not more than 30  
23 eligible employees of private-sector entities to receive  
24 a fellowship under this section.

1           “(2) To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall se-  
2 lect eligible employees under subparagraphs (A) and (B)  
3 of paragraph (1) from among eligible employees who are  
4 veterans in a manner that is reflective of the demographics  
5 of the veteran population of the United States and that  
6 whenever practicable provides a preference to such em-  
7 ployees who represent or service rural areas.

8           “(d) ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES.—For the purposes of  
9 this section, an eligible employee is—

10           “(1) with respect to an employee of the Vet-  
11 erans Benefits Administration or the Veterans  
12 Health Administration, an employee who—

13           “(A) is compensated at a rate of basic pay  
14 not less than the minimum rate of basic pay  
15 payable for grade GS–14 of the General Sched-  
16 ule and not more than either the minimum rate  
17 of basic pay payable to a member of the Senior  
18 Executive Service under section 5382 of title 5  
19 or the minimum rate of basic pay payable pur-  
20 suant to chapter 74 of this title, as the case  
21 may be;

22           “(B) enters into an agreement with the  
23 Secretary under subsection (e); and

1           “(C) submits to the Secretary an applica-  
2           tion containing such information and assur-  
3           ances as the Secretary may require; and

4           “(2) with respect to an employee of a private-  
5           sector entity, an employee who—

6           “(A) is employed in a position whose du-  
7           ties and responsibilities are commensurate with  
8           an employee of the Department described in  
9           paragraph (1);

10           “(B) enters into an agreement with the  
11           Secretary under subsection (e); and

12           “(C) submits to the Secretary an applica-  
13           tion containing such information and assur-  
14           ances as the Secretary may require.

15           “(e) AGREEMENTS.—(1) An agreement between the  
16           Secretary and a Department participant shall be in writ-  
17           ing, shall be signed by the participant, and shall include  
18           the following provisions:

19           “(A) The Secretary’s agreement to provide the  
20           participant with a fellowship under this section;

21           “(B) The participant’s agreement—

22           “(i) to accept the fellowship;

23           “(ii) after completion of the fellowship, to  
24           serve as a full-time employee in the Veterans  
25           Benefits Administration or the Veterans Health

1 Administration for at least 2 years as specified  
2 in the agreement; and

3 “(iii) that, during the 2-year period begin-  
4 ning on the last day of the fellowship, the par-  
5 ticipant will not accept employment in the same  
6 industry as the industry of the private-sector  
7 entity at which the participant accepts the fel-  
8 lowship.

9 “(C) A provision that any financial obligation of  
10 the United States arising out of an agreement en-  
11 tered into under this subchapter, and any obligation  
12 of the participant which is conditioned on such  
13 agreement, is contingent upon funds being appro-  
14 priated.

15 “(D) A statement of the damages to which the  
16 United States is entitled under this subchapter for  
17 the participant’s breach of the agreement.

18 “(E) Such other terms as the Secretary deter-  
19 mines are required to be included in the agreement.

20 “(2) An agreement between the Secretary and a pri-  
21 vate-sector participant shall be in writing, shall be signed  
22 by the participant, and shall include the following provi-  
23 sions:

24 “(A) The Secretary’s agreement to provide the  
25 participant with a fellowship under this section.

1           “(B) The participant’s agreement to accept the  
2           fellowship.

3           “(C) Such other terms as the Secretary deter-  
4           mines are required to be included in the agreement.

5           “(f) TREATMENT OF RECIPIENTS.—(1) A Depart-  
6           ment participant shall be considered an employee of the  
7           Department for all purposes, including for purposes of re-  
8           ceiving a salary and benefits, and shall remain eligible for  
9           all promotion and incentive programs otherwise available  
10          to such an employee.

11          “(2) A private-sector participant shall be considered  
12          an employee of the private-sector entity that employs the  
13          participant for all purposes, including for purposes of re-  
14          ceiving a salary and benefits, and during the fellowship  
15          shall be treated as a contractor of the Department.

16          “(g) REPORTS.—(1) Not later than 60 days after  
17          completing a fellowship under this section, a recipient of  
18          the fellowship shall submit to the Secretary a report on  
19          the fellowship.

20          “(2) Each such report shall describe the duties of the  
21          recipient during the fellowship and any recommendations  
22          of the recipient for the application by the Secretary of in-  
23          dustry processes, technologies, and best practices.

24          “(3) Not later than 7 days after receiving each such  
25          report, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on

1 Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representa-  
2 tives such report without change.

3 “(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 “(1) The term ‘Department participant’ means  
5 an employee of the Veterans Benefits Administration  
6 or the Veterans Health Administration who is par-  
7 ticipating in the fellowship under this section.

8 “(2) The term ‘private-sector entity’ includes  
9 an entity operating under a public-private partner-  
10 ship.

11 “(3) The term ‘private-sector participant’  
12 means an employee of a private-sector entity who is  
13 participating in the fellowship under this section.”.

14 (b) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later  
15 than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act,  
16 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement the Ex-  
17 ecutive Management Fellowship Program required under  
18 section 741 of title 38, United States Code, as added by  
19 subsection (a).

20 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
21 at the beginning of chapter 7 of title 38, United States  
22 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new  
23 items:

“SUBCHAPTER III—EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

“741. Executive Management Fellowship Program.”.

1 **SEC. 203. ACCOUNTABILITY OF LEADERS FOR MANAGING**  
2 **THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 7 of title  
4 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end  
5 the following new section:

6 **“§ 725. Annual performance plan for political ap-**  
7 **pointees**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct an  
9 annual performance plan for each political appointee of  
10 the Department that is similar to the annual performance  
11 plan conducted for an employee of the Department who  
12 is appointed as a career appointee (as that term is defined  
13 in section 3132(a) of title 5) within the Senior Executive  
14 Service at the Department.

15 “(b) ELEMENTS OF PLAN.—Each annual perform-  
16 ance plan conducted under subsection (a) with respect to  
17 a political appointee of the Department shall include an  
18 assessment of whether the appointee is meeting the fol-  
19 lowing goals:

20 “(1) Recruiting, selecting, and retaining well-  
21 qualified individuals for employment at the Depart-  
22 ment.

23 “(2) Engaging and motivating employees.

24 “(3) Training and developing employees and  
25 preparing those employees for future leadership roles  
26 within the Department.



1 position within the competitive service at the Department  
2 of Veterans Affairs that is one grade or equivalent higher  
3 than the grade or equivalent of the position at the Depart-  
4 ment most recently occupied by the employee.

5 (b) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not appoint a  
6 qualified former employee to a position that is more than  
7 one grade (or equivalent) higher than the position at the  
8 Department most recently occupied by the employee.

9 (c) DEFINITION OF QUALIFIED FORMER EM-  
10 PLOYEE.—For purposes of this section, the term “quali-  
11 fied former employee” means any individual who—

12 (1) formerly occupied any career or career con-  
13 ditional position at the Department of Veterans Af-  
14 fairs within 2 years before applying for reemploy-  
15 ment at the Department;

16 (2) voluntarily left such position, or was subject  
17 to a reduction in force, and had a satisfactory per-  
18 formance record while occupying such position; and

19 (3) since leaving such position has maintained  
20 licensing requirements, related to the position, if  
21 any, and gained skill, knowledge, or other factors re-  
22 lated to the position.

1 **SEC. 205. PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECHNICAL**  
2 **EXPERTS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**  
3 **FAIRS.**

4 Not later than one year after the date of the enact-  
5 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall  
6 establish a promotional track system for employees of the  
7 Department of Veterans Affairs that the Secretary deter-  
8 mines are technical experts pursuant to regulations pre-  
9 scribed by the Secretary for purposes of carrying out this  
10 section. Such system shall—

11 (1) provide any such employee the opportunity  
12 to advance within the Department without being re-  
13 quired to transition to a management position; and

14 (2) for purposes of achieving career advance-  
15 ment—

16 (A) provide for the establishment of new  
17 positions within the Department; and

18 (B) notwithstanding any other provision of  
19 law, provide for increases in pay for any such  
20 employee.

21 **SEC. 206. EMPLOYMENT OF STUDENTS AND RECENT GRAD-**  
22 **UATES BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**  
23 **FAIRS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
25 shall prescribe regulations to allow for excepted service ap-  
26 pointments of students and recent graduates leading to

1 conversion to career or career conditional employment of  
2 a student or recent graduate of a qualifying educational  
3 institution, as defined by the Department.

4 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The conversion authority de-  
5 scribed in subsection (a) shall be applicable to individuals  
6 in good standing who—

7 (1) are employed in a qualifying internship or  
8 fellowship program at the Department;

9 (2) are employed in the Department in a volun-  
10 teer capacity and performing substantive duties com-  
11 parable to those of individuals in internship or fel-  
12 lowship programs and meet the required number of  
13 hours for conversion;

14 (3) are employed in the Department under a  
15 contract or agreement with an external nonprofit or-  
16 ganization and performing substantive duties com-  
17 parable to those of individuals in internship or fel-  
18 lowship programs;

19 (4) have received educational assistance under  
20 chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code; or

21 (5) graduated from a qualifying educational in-  
22 stitution, as defined by the Department, and have  
23 not reached 30 years of age.

24 (c) UNIFORMITY.—For the purposes of paragraphs  
25 (2) and (3) of subsection (b), hours of work performed

1 by an individual employed shall be considered equal to  
2 those performed by an individual employed in a qualifying  
3 internship or fellowship program by the Department.

4 **SEC. 207. ENCOURAGEMENT OF TRANSITION OF MILITARY**  
5 **MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS INTO EMPLOY-**  
6 **MENT WITH VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRA-**  
7 **TION.**

8 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a  
9 program to encourage an individual who serves in the  
10 Armed Forces with a military occupational specialty relat-  
11 ing to the provision of health care to seek employment  
12 with the Veterans Health Administration when the indi-  
13 vidual has been discharged or released from service in the  
14 Armed Forces or is contemplating separating from such  
15 service.

16 **SEC. 208. RECRUITING DATABASE AT DEPARTMENT OF**  
17 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

18 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans  
19 Affairs shall establish a single database that lists—

20 (1) each vacant position in the Department of  
21 Veterans Affairs that the Secretary determines is  
22 critical to the mission of the Department, difficult to  
23 fill, or both; and

24 (2) each vacant position in the Department of  
25 Veterans Affairs for a mental health professional.

1 (b) QUALIFIED APPLICANT.—If the Secretary deter-  
2 mines that an applicant for a vacant position listed in the  
3 database established under subsection (a) is qualified for  
4 such position but does not select the applicant for such  
5 position, the Secretary, at the election of the applicant,  
6 may consider the applicant for other similar vacant posi-  
7 tions listed in the database for which the applicant is  
8 qualified.

9 (c) PROLONGED VACANCIES.—If the Secretary does  
10 not fill a vacant position listed in the database established  
11 under subsection (a) after a period determined appro-  
12 priate by the Secretary, the Secretary—

13 (1) may ensure that applicants described in  
14 subsection (b) are considered for such position; and

15 (2) may use the database established under  
16 subsection (a) to assist in filling such position.

17 (d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date  
18 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit  
19 to Congress a report on the use and efficacy of the data-  
20 base established under subsection (a).

21 **SEC. 209. TRAINING FOR HUMAN RESOURCES PROFES-**  
22 **SIONALS OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINIS-**  
23 **TRATION ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
25 shall provide to human resources professionals of the Vet-

1 erans Health Administration training on how to best re-  
2 cruit and retain employees of the Veterans Health Admin-  
3 istration, including with respect to any recruitment and  
4 retention matters that are unique to the Veterans Health  
5 Administration pursuant to chapter 74 of title 38, United  
6 States Code, or other provisions of law.

7 (b) VIRTUAL TRAINING.—Training provided under  
8 this section shall be provided virtually.

9 (c) AMOUNT OF TRAINING.—The Secretary shall en-  
10 sure that each human resources professional of the Vet-  
11 erans Health Administration receives the training de-  
12 scribed in subsection (a)—

13 (1) as soon as practicable after being hired by  
14 the Secretary as a human resources professional;  
15 and

16 (2) annually thereafter.

17 (d) CERTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall require  
18 that each human resources professional of the Veterans  
19 Health Administration, upon the completion of the train-  
20 ing described in subsection (a), certifies that the profes-  
21 sional received the training and understands the informa-  
22 tion provided by the training.

23 (e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not less frequently than an-  
24 nually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on  
25 Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Vet-

1 erans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report  
2 on the training described in subsection (a), including the  
3 cost of providing such training and the number of human  
4 resources professionals who received such training during  
5 the year covered by the report.

6 **SEC. 210. PLAN TO HIRE DIRECTORS OF MEDICAL CENTERS**  
7 **OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

8 (a) PLAN.—Not later than 120 days after the date  
9 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans  
10 Affairs shall develop and implement a plan to hire highly  
11 qualified directors for each medical center of the Depart-  
12 ment of Veterans Affairs that lacks a permanent director  
13 as of the date of the plan.

14 (b) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize under  
15 the plan developed under subsection (a) the hiring of di-  
16 rectors for medical centers that have not had a permanent  
17 director for the longest periods.

18 (c) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The plan developed under  
19 subsection (a) shall include the following:

20 (1) A deadline to hire directors of medical cen-  
21 ters of the Department as described in such sub-  
22 section.

23 (2) Identification of the possible impediments to  
24 such hiring.



1       ment of Veterans Affairs who voluntarily separate  
2       from the Department.

3           (2) CONSULTATION.—Such exit survey shall be  
4       developed in consultation with an appropriate non-  
5       Department entity with experience developing such  
6       surveys.

7       (b) SURVEY CONTENT.—The survey shall include, at  
8       a minimum, the following:

9           (1) Reasons for leaving the Department.

10          (2) Efforts made by the supervisor of the em-  
11       ployee to retain the individual.

12          (3) The extent of job satisfaction and engage-  
13       ment during the employment.

14          (4) The intent of employee to either remain em-  
15       ployed within the Federal Government or to leave  
16       employment with the Federal Government.

17          (5) Such other matters as the Secretary deter-  
18       mines appropriate.

19       (c) ANONYMITY OF SURVEY CONTENT.—The Sec-  
20       retary shall ensure that data collected under subsection

21       (a)—

22           (1) is anonymized, including through the use of  
23       a location that allows for privacy;

24           (2) is not directly visible by another employee;

25       and

1           (3) does not require the departing employee to  
2           input any personally identifiable data.

3           (d) SHARING OF SURVEY DATA.—The Secretary  
4           shall ensure that the results of the survey required by sub-  
5           section (a) are—

6           (1) aggregated at the Veterans Integrated Serv-  
7           ice Network level; and

8           (2) shared on an annual basis with directors  
9           and managers of facilities of the Department and  
10          the Veterans Integrated Service Networks.

11          (e) ANNUAL REPORT.—

12          (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year  
13          after the date of the enactment of this Act and not  
14          less frequently than once each year thereafter, the  
15          Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Vet-  
16          erans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on  
17          Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a  
18          report containing the aggregate results of the exit  
19          survey under subsection (a) covering the year prior  
20          to the report.

21          (2) CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under  
22          paragraph (1) shall include, for the period covered  
23          by the report, the following:

24                  (A) An analysis of the most common rea-  
25                  sons employees choose to leave the Department.

1 (B) The steps the Secretary is taking to  
2 improve retention, particularly for mission-crit-  
3 ical occupations.

4 (C) The demographic characteristics of  
5 employees choosing to leave the Department.

6 (D) Any legislative barriers to improving  
7 employee retention.

8 (E) The total number of employees who  
9 voluntarily separated from the Department and  
10 the number and percentage of whom took the  
11 exit survey under subsection (a).

12 **SEC. 212. REQUIREMENT THAT PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS EM-**  
13 **PLOYED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**  
14 **AFFAIRS RECEIVE COMPETITIVE PAY.**

15 Section 7451(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code,  
16 is amended—

17 (1) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as sub-  
18 paragraph (C);

19 (2) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the fol-  
20 lowing new subparagraph (B):

21 “(B) Physician assistant.”; and

22 (3) in subparagraph (C), as redesignated by  
23 paragraph (1), by striking “and registered nurse”  
24 and inserting “registered nurse, and physician as-  
25 sistant”.

1 **SEC. 213. EXPANSION OF DIRECT-HIRING AUTHORITY FOR**  
2 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN**  
3 **CASE OF SHORTAGE OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED**  
4 **CANDIDATES.**

5 Section 3304(a)(3)(B) of title 5, United States Code,  
6 is amended by inserting “(or, with respect to the Depart-  
7 ment of Veterans Affairs, that there exists a severe short-  
8 age of highly qualified candidates)” after “severe shortage  
9 of candidates”.

10 **SEC. 214. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED**  
11 **STATES ASSESSMENT OF SUCCESSION PLAN-**  
12 **NING AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**  
13 **FAIRS.**

14 (a) ASSESSMENT.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of  
16 the United States shall assess the extent to which  
17 key succession planning policies and guidance at the  
18 Department of Veterans Affairs, including the Vet-  
19 erans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits  
20 Administration, and the National Cemetery Adminis-  
21 tration, are consistent with leading practices for suc-  
22 cession and workforce planning identified by Comp-  
23 troller General.

24 (2) ADDITIONAL MATTERS.—In carrying out  
25 the assessment required by paragraph (1), the

1 Comptroller General may assess such other matters  
2 as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

3 (b) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date  
4 of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall  
5 submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Sen-  
6 ate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House  
7 of Representatives a report on the assessment carried out  
8 under subsection (a).

9 (c) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON STUDY ON COMPLIANCE  
10 WITH POLICIES AND GUIDANCE.—It is the sense of Con-  
11 gress that—

12 (1) the Comptroller General should conduct a  
13 study to examine the extent to which a sampling of  
14 installations of the Department of Veterans Affairs  
15 are complying with policies and guidance of the De-  
16 partment, as well as applicable leading practices;  
17 and

18 (2) the scope and timeframe of a study con-  
19 ducted as described in paragraph (1) may be de-  
20 pendent upon the findings of the Comptroller Gen-  
21 eral with respect to the assessment carried out  
22 under subsection (a).

1           **TITLE III—MAJOR MEDICAL**  
2                           **FACILITY LEASES**

3   **SEC. 301. AUTHORIZATION OF CERTAIN MAJOR MEDICAL**  
4                           **FACILITY LEASES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
5                           **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

6           The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the  
7 following major medical facility leases at the locations  
8 specified and in an amount for each lease not to exceed  
9 the amount specified for such location (not including any  
10 estimated cancellation costs):

11                   (1) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Ann  
12           Arbor, Michigan, an amount not to exceed  
13           \$4,247,000.

14                   (2) For a new outpatient mental health clinic,  
15           Birmingham, Alabama, an amount not to exceed  
16           \$6,649,000.

17                   (3) For new research space, Boston, Massachu-  
18           setts, an amount not to exceed \$6,224,000.

19                   (4) For a replacement research space, Charles-  
20           ton, South Carolina, an amount not to exceed  
21           \$7,274,000.

22                   (5) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Corpus  
23           Christi, Texas, an amount not to exceed \$6,556,000.

1           (6) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Day-  
2           tona Beach, Florida, an amount not to exceed  
3           \$12,198,000.

4           (7) For a replacement Chief Business Office  
5           Purchased Care office space, Denver, Colorado, an  
6           amount not to exceed \$14,784,000.

7           (8) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Fred-  
8           ericksburg, Virginia, an amount not to exceed  
9           \$45,015,000.

10          (9) For a new outpatient clinic, Gainesville,  
11          Florida, an amount not to exceed \$7,891,000.

12          (10) For an outpatient mental health clinic,  
13          Gainesville, Florida, an amount not to exceed  
14          \$4,320,000.

15          (11) For a replacement outpatient clinic,  
16          Hampton Roads, Virginia, an amount not to exceed  
17          \$18,141,000.

18          (12) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Indi-  
19          anapolis, Indiana, an amount not to exceed  
20          \$7,876,000.

21          (13) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Jack-  
22          sonville, Florida, an amount not to exceed  
23          \$18,623,000.

1           (14) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Mis-  
2           soula, Montana, an amount not to exceed  
3           \$6,942,000.

4           (15) For a replacement outpatient mental  
5           health clinic, Northern Colorado, Colorado, an  
6           amount not to exceed \$8,904,000.

7           (16) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Ocala,  
8           Florida, an amount not to exceed \$5,026,000.

9           (17) For a new outpatient clinic, Oxnard, Cali-  
10          fornia, an amount not to exceed \$5,274,000.

11          (18) For a new outpatient clinic, Pike County,  
12          Georgia, an amount not to exceed \$5,565,000.

13          (19) For a new outpatient clinic, Pittsburgh,  
14          Pennsylvania, an amount not to exceed \$6,247,000.

15          (20) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Port-  
16          land, Maine, an amount not to exceed \$6,808,000.

17          (21) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Ra-  
18          leigh, North Carolina, an amount not to exceed  
19          \$21,870,000.

20          (22) For a replacement outpatient clinic, phase  
21          II, Rochester, New York, an amount not to exceed  
22          \$3,645,000.

23          (23) For a replacement research space, San  
24          Diego, California, an amount not to exceed  
25          \$4,852,000.

1           (24) For a new outpatient clinic, Santa Rosa,  
2           California, an amount not to exceed \$6,922,000.

3           (25) For a replacement mental health clinic,  
4           Tampa, Florida, an amount not to exceed  
5           \$13,387,000.

6           (26) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Lake-  
7           land, Tampa, Florida, an amount not to exceed  
8           \$10,760,000.

9           (27) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Terre  
10          Haute, Indiana, an amount not to exceed  
11          \$4,102,000.

12          (28) For a replacement outpatient clinic, Rapid  
13          City, South Dakota, an amount not to exceed  
14          \$4,532,000.

15 **SEC. 302. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR MED-**  
16 **ICAL FACILITY LEASES.**

17          There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-  
18          retary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2018 or the year  
19          in which funds are appropriated for the Medical Facilities  
20          account \$274,634,000 for the major medical facility leases  
21          authorized in section 301.

1           **TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS**

2   **SEC. 401. EXTENSION OF REDUCTION IN AMOUNT OF PEN-**  
3                   **SION FURNISHED BY DEPARTMENT OF VET-**  
4                   **ERANS AFFAIRS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS**  
5                   **COVERED BY MEDICAID PLANS FOR SERV-**  
6                   **ICES FURNISHED BY NURSING FACILITIES.**

7           Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code,  
8 is amended by striking “September 30, 2024” and insert-  
9 ing “September 30, 2027”.

10 **SEC. 402. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT FOR COLLECTION**  
11                   **OF FEES FOR HOUSING LOANS GUARANTEED**  
12                   **BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

13           Section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code,  
14 is amended—

15                   (1) in subparagraph (A)—

16                           (A) in clause (iii), by striking “September  
17                           30, 2024” and inserting “September 30,  
18                           2027”; and

19                           (B) in clause (iv), by striking “September  
20                           30, 2024” and inserting “September 30,  
21                           2027”;

22                   (2) in subparagraph (B)—

23                           (A) in clause (i), by striking “September  
24                           30, 2024” and inserting “September 30,  
25                           2027”; and

1 (B) in clause (ii), by striking “September  
2 30, 2024” and inserting “September 30,  
3 2027”;

4 (3) in subparagraph (C)—

5 (A) in clause (i), by striking “September  
6 30, 2024” and inserting “September 30,  
7 2027”; and

8 (B) in clause (ii), by striking “September  
9 30, 2024” and inserting “September 30,  
10 2027”; and

11 (4) in subparagraph (D)—

12 (A) in clause (i), by striking “September  
13 30, 2024” and inserting “September 30,  
14 2027”; and

15 (B) in clause (ii), by striking “September  
16 30, 2024” and inserting “September 30,  
17 2027”.

18 **SEC. 403. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO USE INCOME IN-**  
19 **FORMATION.**

20 Section 5317(g) of title 38, United States Code, is  
21 amended by striking “September 30, 2024” and inserting  
22 “September 30, 2027”.

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to authorize appropriations and to appropriate amounts for the Veterans Choice Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve hiring authorities of the Department, to

authorize major medical facility leases, and for other purposes.”.