

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 2878, with Amendments

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

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2878

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a Native VetSuccess at Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 28, 2021

Mr. GALLEGO (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. O'HALLERAN, and Mr. COLE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a Native VetSuccess at Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program.

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 “Native VetSuccess at
5 Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIVE VETSUCCESS AT TRIBAL COLLEGES AND**
2 **UNIVERSITIES PILOT PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after
4 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
5 Veterans Affairs shall carry out a five-year pilot program,
6 to be known as the “Native VetSuccess at Tribal Colleges
7 and Universities Pilot Program”. Under such pilot pro-
8 gram the Secretary shall—

9 (1) identify three regional Native VetSuccess
10 service areas consisting of at least two participating
11 Tribal colleges or universities;

12 (2) assign to each regional Native VetSuccess
13 service area a VetSuccess on Campus counselor and
14 a full-time Vet Center outreach coordinator, both of
15 whom shall be based on one or more of the partici-
16 pating Tribal colleges or universities in the service
17 area; and

18 (3) provide for eligible students at such partici-
19 pating colleges and universities with all services for
20 which such students would be eligible under the
21 VetSuccess on Campus program of the Department
22 of Veterans Affairs.

23 (b) ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.—For purposes of the pilot
24 program, an eligible student is a student who is a veteran,
25 member of the Armed Forces, or dependent of a veteran
26 or member of the Armed Forces who is eligible for any

1 service or benefit under the VetSuccess on Campus pro-
2 gram of the Department.

3 (c) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—In developing
4 the pilot program under this section, the Secretary, acting
5 through the Veteran Readiness and Employment Program
6 of the Department of Veterans Affairs and in coordination
7 with the Office of Tribal Government Relations of the De-
8 partment, shall consult with Indian tribes, Tribal organi-
9 zations, and veterans service organizations regarding each
10 of the following:

11 (1) The design of the pilot program.

12 (2) The selection of the three regional Native
13 VetSuccess service areas and participating Tribal
14 colleges and universities, taking into consideration—

15 (A) the number of eligible students en-
16 rolled in the college or university and in the re-
17 gional service area;

18 (B) the capacity of the colleges and univer-
19 sities in the regional service area to accommo-
20 date a full-time VetSuccess on Campus coun-
21 selor and a full-time Vet Center outreach coor-
22 dinator;

23 (C) the lack of information available at the
24 colleges and universities in the regional service
25 area about and lack of access to benefits and

1 services under the laws administered by the
2 Secretary; and

3 (D) any other factor that the Secretary or
4 the Indian tribes, Tribal organizations, and vet-
5 erans service organizations identify as relevant.

6 (3) The most effective way to provide culturally
7 competent outreach and services to eligible students
8 at Tribal colleges and universities.

9 (d) OUTREACH TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.—
10 The Secretary shall provide notice of the pilot program
11 to all Tribal colleges and universities and encourage all
12 Tribal colleges and universities to coordinate with each
13 other to create regional service areas to participate in the
14 pilot program.

15 (e) BRIEFINGS AND REPORTS.—

16 (1) IMPLEMENTATION BRIEFING.—Not later
17 than one year after the date of the enactment of this
18 Act, the Secretary shall provide for the Committee
19 on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Natural
20 Resources of the House of Representatives and the
21 Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee
22 on Indian Affairs of the Senate a briefing on—

23 (A) the design, structure, and objectives of
24 the pilot program; and

1 (B) the three regional Native Vet Success
2 service areas and the Tribal colleges and uni-
3 versities selected for participation in the pilot
4 program and the reason for the selection of
5 such service areas and such colleges and univer-
6 sities.

7 (2) REPORT.—Not later than four years after
8 the date on which the Secretary establishes the pilot
9 program, the Secretary shall submit to such Com-
10 mittees a report on the pilot program. Such report
11 shall include each of the following:

12 (A) The number of eligible students pro-
13 vided services through the pilot program.

14 (B) The types of services that eligible stu-
15 dents received through the pilot program.

16 (C) The graduation rate of eligible stu-
17 dents who received services through the pilot
18 program.

19 (D) The rate of employment within one
20 year of graduation for eligible students who re-
21 ceived services through the pilot program.

22 (E) Feedback from each Tribal college or
23 university that participated in the pilot pro-
24 gram, including on the regional nature of the
25 program.

1 (F) Analysis of the feasibility of expanding
2 a regionally based Native VetSuccess at Tribal
3 Colleges and Universities Program, including an
4 explanation of the challenges of such a model
5 due to issues with distance, communication, and
6 coordination, and to the level of unmet services.

7 (G) A detailed legislative proposal regard-
8 ing a long-term extension of the pilot program,
9 including a budget, if the Secretary determines
10 that such an extension is appropriate.

11 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) The term “Tribal college or university” has
13 the meaning given such term under section 316 of
14 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
15 1059e).

16 (2) The term “tribal organization” has the
17 meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian
18 Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act
19 (25 U.S.C. 450b).

20 (3) The term “culturally competent” means
21 considerate of the unique values, customs, traditions,
22 cultures, and languages of Native American vet-
23 erans.

1 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR HIGH**
2 **TECHNOLOGY PILOT PROGRAM.**

3 Subsection (g) of section 116 of the Harry W.
4 Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017
5 (Public Law 115–48; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note), as amended
6 by section 4302 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe,
7 M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement
8 Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–315), is amended to read
9 as follows:

10 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Funds
11 shall be made available for carrying out the pilot program
12 under this section from funds appropriated to, or other-
13 wise made available to, the Department for the payment
14 of readjustment benefits, in the following amounts for a
15 fiscal year in which the Secretary carries out the pilot pro-
16 gram:

17 “(1) For fiscal year 2019, \$62,000,000.

18 “(2) For fiscal year 2020, \$63,000,000.

19 “(3) For fiscal year 2021, \$90,000,000.

20 “(4) For fiscal year 2022, \$90,000,000.

21 “(5) For fiscal year 2023, \$60,000,000.

22 “(6) For fiscal year 2024, \$0.”.

1 **SEC. 4. PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO STU-**
2 **DENTS WHO ARE “ROUNDING OUT” UNDER**
3 **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF**
4 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680(a) of title 38,
6 United States Code, is amended—

7 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “paragraph
8 (2)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) and (3)”; and

9 (2) by adding at the end the following new
10 paragraph:

11 “(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), in the case of
12 an eligible veteran or eligible person who is pursuing a
13 program of education on less than a half-time basis during
14 a period that is the last semester, term, or academic period
15 the veteran or person will be enrolled in the program of
16 education because the veteran or person will complete the
17 program of education at the end of that semester, term
18 or academic period, the Secretary may, pursuant to such
19 regulations as the Secretary shall prescribe, provide to the
20 veteran or person educational assistance under chapter 30,
21 32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title or under chapter 1606 of
22 title 10, including a monthly housing stipend described in
23 section 3313(c) of this title, on the basis of the total num-
24 ber of credits or courses in which the veteran or person
25 is enrolled, if—

1 “(A) the number of credits the veteran or per-
2 son needs to complete the program of education is
3 less than the number of credits that would constitute
4 enrollment on a more than half-time basis for that
5 last semester, term, or academic period; and

6 “(B) the veteran or person—

7 “(i) is enrolled in, or has completed, every
8 course offered by the program of education dur-
9 ing the last semester, term, or academic period
10 in which the veteran or person is enrolled in the
11 program of education; and

12 “(ii) enrolls in an additional course that is
13 not required for the completion of such pro-
14 gram of education and the enrollment in the
15 non-required course in addition to the required
16 course or courses in which the veteran or per-
17 son is enrolled constitutes enrollment on more
18 than a half-time basis.”.

19 (b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by
20 subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2021, and
21 apply with respect to any semester, term, or academic pe-
22 riod that begins on or after that date.

1 **SEC. 5. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.**

2 Section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code,
3 is amended by striking “October 1, 2030” each place it
4 appears and inserting “December 9, 2030”.

5 **SEC. 6. EXPANSION AND EXTENSION OF DEPARTMENT OF**
6 **VETERANS AFFAIRS ASSISTANCE FOR HOME-**
7 **LESS VETERANS.**

8 (a) EXPANSION.—Subsection (a) of section 2041 of
9 title 38, United States Code, is amended—

10 (1) in paragraph (1)—

11 (A) in the matter preceding subparagraph
12 (A), by inserting “or permanent housing” after
13 “shelter”;

14 (B) in subparagraph (A), by striking
15 “named in, or approved by the Secretary under,
16 section 5902 of this title” and inserting “that
17 is the recipient of a grant under section 2011,
18 2013, 2044, or 2061 of this title”; and

19 (C) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “,
20 tribal entity,” after “State”; and

21 (2) in paragraph (3)(B)—

22 (A) in clause (i), by inserting “or to sell or
23 rent the property directly to homeless veterans
24 or veterans at-risk of homelessness” after “fam-
25 ilies”; and

1 (B) in each of clauses (i), (ii), and (iii), by
2 striking the comma and inserting a semicolon.

3 (b) EXTENSION.—Subsection (c) of such section is
4 amended by striking “September 30, 2017” and inserting
5 “September 30, 2025”.

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a Native VetSuccess at Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program, and for other purposes.”.