

Union Calendar No.

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5516

[Report No. 117-]

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 8, 2021

Mr. ELLZEY (for himself and Mr. BOST) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

NOVEMBER --, 2021

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italics]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on October 8, 2021]

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 “VITAL Assessment Act”.*

5 **SEC. 2. VETERANS INTEGRATION TO ACADEMIC LEADER-**
6 **SHIP PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF**
7 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

8 *(a) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date*
9 *of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Af-*
10 *fairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs*
11 *of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on*
12 *the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership program*
13 *of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The report shall in-*
14 *clude the following:*

15 *(1) The number of medical centers of the Depart-*
16 *ment, institutions of higher learning, non-college de-*
17 *gree programs, and student veterans supported by the*
18 *program, and relevant trends since the program*
19 *began.*

20 *(2) The staff and resources allocated to the pro-*
21 *gram, and relevant trends since the program began.*

22 *(3) An assessment of the outcomes and effective-*
23 *ness of the program in—*

24 *(A) supporting student veterans;*

1 (B) connecting student veterans to needed
2 services of the Department or services provided
3 by non-Department entities;

4 (C) addressing the mental health needs of
5 student veterans;

6 (D) lowering the suicide risk of student vet-
7 erans; and

8 (E) helping student veterans achieve edu-
9 cational goals.

10 (4) An assessment of barriers to expanding the
11 program and how the Secretary intends to address
12 such barriers.

13 (5) An assessment of whether the program should
14 be expanded outside of the Office of Mental Health
15 and Suicide Prevention to support students veterans
16 with needs unrelated to mental health or suicide.

17 (b) *UNIFORM BEST PRACTICES, GOALS, AND MEAS-*
18 *URES.*—The Secretary shall establish best practices, goals,
19 and measures for the Veterans Integration to Academic
20 Leadership program of the Department that are uniform
21 among the medical centers of the Department.

22 (c) *OUTREACH.*—The Secretary shall conduct outreach
23 among the Armed Forces, veterans service organizations, in-
24 stitutions of higher learning, and non-college degree pro-

1 *grams with respect to the Veterans Integration to Academic*
2 *Leadership program of the Department.*

3 *(d) ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary shall assess the fea-*
4 *sibility and advisability of including the suicide rate for*
5 *student veterans in the National Veteran Suicide Preven-*
6 *tion Annual Report of the Office of Mental Health and Sui-*
7 *cide Prevention of the Department.*

8 *(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:*

9 *(1) The term “institution of higher learning” has*
10 *the meaning given that term in section 3452 of title*
11 *38, United States Code.*

12 *(2) The term “student veteran” means the fol-*
13 *lowing:*

14 *(A) A veteran or member of the Armed*
15 *Forces using educational assistance under any of*
16 *the following provisions of law:*

17 *(i) Chapter 30, 31, 32, or 33 of title*
18 *38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 or*
19 *1607 of title 10, United States Code.*

20 *(ii) Section 116 of the Harry W.*
21 *Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance*
22 *Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–48; 38 U.S.C.*
23 *3001 note).*

1 *(iii) Section 8006 of the American Res-*
2 *cue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2;*
3 *38 U.S.C. 3001 note prec.).*

4 *(B) A veteran who is enrolled in an institu-*
5 *tion of higher learning or other training pro-*
6 *gram, without regard to whether the veteran is*
7 *using educational assistance specified in sub-*
8 *paragraph (A).*