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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements to the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements to the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, 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 “Veterans Justice Out-  
5 reach Improvement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH**  
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 (a) **OUTREACH REQUIREMENT.**—The Secretary of  
4 Veterans Affairs shall conduct outreach regarding the Vet-  
5 erans Justice Outreach Program to justice-involved vet-  
6 erans, military and veterans service organizations, and rel-  
7 evant stakeholders in the criminal justice community, in-  
8 cluding officials from local law enforcement, court, and jail  
9 systems and others as determined appropriate by the Sec-  
10 retary. Such outreach—

11 (1) shall be designed—

12 (A) to spread awareness and under-  
13 standing of the Program;

14 (B) to spread awareness and under-  
15 standing of veteran eligibility for the Program,  
16 including the eligibility of veterans who were  
17 discharged from service in the Armed Forces  
18 under conditions other than honorable; and

19 (C) to improve the identification of justice-  
20 involved veterans; and

21 (2) may be conducted in person, virtually, or  
22 through other means, including by the dissemination  
23 of informational materials and contact information.

24 (b) **INCREASE IN NUMBER OF VJO SPECIALISTS.**—  
25 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase the num-  
26 ber of Veterans Justice Outreach specialists responsible

1 for supporting justice-involved veterans in rural, remote,  
2 or underserved areas, including areas with local criminal  
3 justice systems located far from Department of Veterans  
4 Affairs medical centers, as determined by the Secretary.

5 (c) PERFORMANCE GOALS, MEASURES, AND IMPLE-  
6 MENTATION TIMELINES.—

7 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Vet-  
8 erans Affairs shall establish performance goals,  
9 measures, and implementation timelines for—

10 (A) the Veterans Justice Outreach Pro-  
11 gram;

12 (B) Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists;  
13 and

14 (C) providing support for research regard-  
15 ing justice-involved veterans.

16 (2) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the  
17 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
18 shall submit to Congress a report on the perform-  
19 ance goals, measures, and implementation timelines  
20 established under paragraph (1).

21 (d) TRAINING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall  
22 ensure that all Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists re-  
23 ceive training not less frequently than annually on—

24 (1) best practices for identifying and con-  
25 ducting outreach to justice-involved veterans and rel-

1       evant stakeholders in the criminal justice commu-  
2       nity; and

3               (2) veteran eligibility for the Veterans Justice  
4       Outreach Program.

5       (e) REPORT ON VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS.—

6       Not later than one year after the date of the enactment  
7       of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a re-  
8       port on—

9               (1) the availability and efficacy of veterans  
10       treatment courts;

11              (2) best practices for veterans treatment courts  
12       in meeting the needs of both justice-involved vet-  
13       erans and local criminal justice systems; and

14              (3) the ability of justice-involved veterans to ac-  
15       cess veterans treatment courts, including any bar-  
16       riers that exist to increasing such access.

17       (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

18              (1) The term “justice-involved veteran” means  
19       a veteran with active, ongoing, or recent contact  
20       with some component of a local criminal justice sys-  
21       tem.

22              (2) The term “Veterans Justice Outreach Pro-  
23       gram” means the program through which the De-  
24       partment of Veterans Affairs identifies justice-in-

1       involved veterans and provides such veterans with ac-  
2       cess to Department services.

3           (3) The term “Veterans Justice Outreach Spe-  
4       cialist” means an employee of the Department of  
5       Veterans Affairs who serves as a liaison between the  
6       Department and the local criminal justice system on  
7       behalf of a justice-involved veteran.

8           (4) The term “veterans treatment court” means  
9       a State or local court that is participating in the vet-  
10      erans treatment court program (as defined in section  
11      2991(i)(1) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe  
12      Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa(i)(1))).