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(Original Signature of Member)

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to entities that provide legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PANETTA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to entities that provide legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

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 “Legal Services for
5 Homeless Veterans Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. LEGAL SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS AND**
2 **VETERANS AT RISK FOR HOMELESSNESS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 20 of title 38, United
4 States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2022
5 the following new section:

6 **“§ 2022A. Legal services for homeless veterans and**
7 **veterans at risk for homelessness**

8 “(a) GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—
9 Subject to the availability of appropriations provided for
10 such purpose, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make
11 grants or enter into cooperative agreements to eligible en-
12 tities that provide legal services to homeless veterans and
13 veterans at risk for homelessness.

14 “(b) CRITERIA FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE
15 AGREEMENTS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish criteria
16 and requirements for grants and cooperative agreements
17 under this section, including criteria for entities eligible
18 to receive such grants or cooperative agreements, and shall
19 publish such criteria and requirements in the Federal Reg-
20 ister.

21 “(2) In establishing criteria and requirements under
22 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult with organiza-
23 tions that have experience in providing services to home-
24 less veterans.

25 “(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may make
26 a grant or enter into a cooperative agreement under this

1 section to an entity applying for such a grant or coopera-
2 tive agreement only if the applicant for the grant or coop-
3 erative agreement—

4 “(1) is a public or nonprofit private entity with
5 the capacity (as determined by the Secretary) to ef-
6 fectively administer a grant or cooperative agree-
7 ment under this section;

8 “(2) demonstrates that adequate financial sup-
9 port will be available to carry out the services for
10 which the grant or cooperative agreement is sought
11 consistent with application; and

12 “(3) agrees to meet the applicable criteria and
13 requirements established under subsection (b) and
14 has, as determined by the Secretary, demonstrated
15 the capacity to meet such criteria and requirements.

16 “(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds provided under grants
17 or cooperative agreements under this section shall be used
18 to provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans
19 at risk for homelessness to address legal matters that con-
20 tribute to the risk of becoming and remaining homeless.

21 “(e) REPORTS.—On a biennial basis, the Secretary
22 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of
23 the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on
24 grants and cooperative agreements under this section. To

1 the extent feasible, each such report shall include the fol-
2 lowing with respect to the year covered by the report:

3 “(1) The number of homeless veterans assisted.

4 “(2) A description of the legal services pro-
5 vided.

6 “(3) A description of the legal matters ad-
7 dressed.

8 “(4) An analysis by the Secretary with respect
9 to the operational effectiveness and cost-effectiveness
10 of the services provided.”.

11 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
12 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
13 after the item relating to section 2022 the following new
14 item:

“2022A. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homeless-
ness.”.

15 (c) CRITERIA.—Not later than 90 days after the date
16 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans
17 Affairs shall establish the criteria and requirements in the
18 Federal Register pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of section
19 2022A of title 38, United States Code, as added by sub-
20 section (a).