

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 335

To establish the Commission on the Future for America's Veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON (for himself and Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish the Commission on the Future for America's
Veterans.

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 "Commission on the
5 Future for America's Veterans Act".

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

7 There is established a commission to be known as the
8 Commission on the Future for America's Veterans (here-
9 inafter in this Act referred to as the "Commission").

1 **SEC. 3. MEMBERSHIP.**

2 (a) COMPOSITION.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be
4 composed of 12 members appointed in accordance
5 with paragraph (2) and 3 ex officio members des-
6 ignated in paragraph (3).

7 (2) APPOINTED MEMBERS.—Members of the
8 Commission shall be appointed as follows:

9 (A) The Speaker of the House of Rep-
10 resentatives and the majority leader of the Sen-
11 ate, acting jointly, in consultation with the
12 chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Af-
13 fairs of the Senate and the chairman of the
14 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
15 Representatives, shall appoint four members.

16 (B) Eight members shall be appointed
17 from among individuals who are not full-time
18 officers or employees of the United States as
19 follows:

20 (i) The chairman of the Committee on
21 Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the
22 ranking member of that committee shall
23 each appoint one member.

24 (ii) The chairman of the Committee
25 on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
26 resentatives and the ranking member of

1 that committee shall each appoint one
2 member.

3 (iii) The chairman of the Committee
4 on Armed Services of the Senate and the
5 ranking member of that committee shall
6 each appoint one member.

7 (iv) The chairman of the Committee
8 on National Security of the House of Rep-
9 resentatives and the ranking member of
10 that committee shall each appoint one
11 member.

12 (C) Members appointed under this para-
13 graph shall have appropriate experience and ex-
14 pertise on veterans, organizational, and man-
15 agement matters, as well as on health care serv-
16 ices available to veterans provided by the Sec-
17 retary of Veterans Affairs, and to the maximum
18 extent practicable, shall be veterans.

19 (3) EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.—The following shall
20 serve as members of the Commission:

21 (A) The Under Secretary for Health of the
22 Department of Veterans Affairs, or the Under
23 Secretary's designee.

1 (B) The Assistant Secretary of Defense for
2 Health Affairs of the Department of Defense,
3 or the Assistant Secretary's designee.

4 (C) The Assistant Secretary for Planning
5 and Evaluation of the Department of Health
6 and Human Services, or the Assistant Sec-
7 retary's designee.

8 (b) DESIGNATION OF THE CHAIRMAN.—The Speaker
9 of the House of Representatives and the majority leader
10 of the Senate, acting jointly, in consultation with the
11 chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
12 Senate and the chairman of the Committee on Veterans'
13 Affairs of the House of Representatives shall, from the
14 members appointed under subsection (a)(1), designate the
15 chairman of the Commission.

16 (c) TIME FOR APPOINTMENT, DESIGNATION.—The
17 members of the Commission shall be appointed and the
18 chairman of the Commission shall be designated not later
19 than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

20 (d) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—

21 (1) PERIOD.—Members of the Commission shall
22 be appointed for the life of the Commission.

23 (2) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Commis-
24 sion shall not affect its powers and shall be filled in
25 the same manner as the original appointment.

1 (e) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the
2 Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser num-
3 ber may hold hearings.

4 (f) MEETINGS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall meet
6 at the call of the chairman of the Commission.

7 (2) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 30 days
8 after the date on which all members of the Commis-
9 sion have been appointed, the Commission shall hold
10 its first meeting.

11 (g) MAJORITY VOTE.—The Commission may not sub-
12 mit a legislative proposal or make a recommendation or
13 report to Congress unless the proposal, recommendation
14 or report is approved by a majority of the members of
15 the Commission present and voting, a quorum being
16 present.

17 (h) AUTHORITY OF INDIVIDUALS TO ACT FOR COM-
18 MISSION.—Any member or agent of the Commission may,
19 if authorized by the Commission, take any action which
20 the Commission is authorized to take under this Act.

21 **SEC. 4. DUTIES.**

22 (a) STUDY.—The Commission shall conduct a com-
23 prehensive study of health care services provided by the
24 Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

1 (b) MATTERS STUDIED.—The matters studied by the
2 Commission shall include—

3 (1) legislative proposals to improve delivery of
4 health care to veterans, including H.R. 1767 of the
5 104th Congress, H.R. 3117 of the 104th Congress,
6 H.R. 3119 of the 104th Congress, and the G.I. Bill
7 of Health (H.R. 3950 of the 104th Congress);

8 (2) alternative means for delivery of health care
9 to a veteran (such as managed care); and

10 (3) eligibility reform.

11 (c) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT BILL.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
13 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
14 Commission shall submit to Congress a legislative
15 proposal in the form of a draft bill (hereinafter in
16 this Act referred to as a “demonstration project
17 bill”).

18 (2) CONTENT OF BILL.—

19 (A) AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY.—A dem-
20 onstration project bill shall authorize the Sec-
21 retary of Veterans Affairs to implement tem-
22 porary demonstration projects to improve health
23 care services under the Department of Veterans
24 Affairs.

1 (B) IMPLEMENTATION AT MEDICAL CEN-
2 TERS.—A demonstration project bill shall pro-
3 vide that the temporary demonstration projects
4 be implemented at no fewer than 20 and no
5 greater than 40 Department of Veterans Af-
6 fairs medical centers specified in the dem-
7 onstration project bill.

8 (C) SELECTION OF CENTERS.—In selecting
9 the centers under subparagraph (B), the chair-
10 man, in consultation with the Secretary of Vet-
11 erans Affairs, shall assure a diversity of centers
12 according to geographic areas, demographic
13 characteristics of, and specialized medical serv-
14 ices provided by individual centers.

15 (D) TERMINATION.—A demonstration
16 project bill shall provide that the temporary
17 demonstration projects terminate not later than
18 18 months after the date of the enactment of
19 the Act providing for such temporary dem-
20 onstration projects.

21 (d) EVALUATION OF PROJECTS; AUDIT.—The Com-
22 mission shall monitor and evaluate the temporary dem-
23 onstration projects and shall arrange for audits of such
24 projects.

1 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 15 months after the
2 date of the enactment of the Act providing for the tem-
3 porary demonstration projects under subsection (c), the
4 chairman of the Commission shall submit to Congress a
5 report which contains a detailed statement of the findings
6 and conclusions of the Commission with respect to the
7 temporary demonstration projects, together with rec-
8 ommendations for such legislation and administrative ac-
9 tion as the Commission considers appropriate.

10 **SEC. 5. EXPEDITED CONGRESSIONAL PROCEDURE.**

11 (a) PROCEDURE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-
12 TIVES.—

13 (1) INTRODUCTION OF DEMONSTRATION
14 PROJECT BILL.—A qualified demonstration project
15 bill is one that is introduced by the majority leader
16 of the House of Representatives for himself and the
17 minority leader of the House of Representatives, or
18 by Members designated jointly by the majority lead-
19 er and the minority leader of the House of Rep-
20 resentatives, not later than the close of the 15th day
21 after the date on which such bill is submitted to the
22 House of Representatives under section 4(c).

23 (2) COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION.—If a commit-
24 tee to which a qualified demonstration project bill
25 has been referred has not reported such bill at the

1 close of the 10th day after the date of the bill's in-
2 troduction, such committee shall be automatically
3 discharged from further consideration of the bill,
4 and the bill shall be placed on the appropriate cal-
5 endar.

6 (3) COMPUTATION OF DAYS.—For purposes of
7 this subsection, in computing the number of days,
8 there shall be excluded any day on which the House
9 of Representatives is not in session.

10 (b) PROCEDURE IN THE SENATE.—

11 (c) RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
12 AND SENATE.—This section is enacted by the Congress—

13 (1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of
14 the House of Representatives and the Senate, re-
15 spectively, and as such it shall be considered as part
16 of the rules of each House, respectively, or of that
17 House to which it specifically applies, and such rules
18 shall supersede other rules only to the extent that
19 they are inconsistent therewith; and

20 (2) with full recognition of the constitutional
21 right of either House to change the rules (so far as
22 relating to such House) at any time, in the same
23 manner and to the same extent as in the case of any
24 other rule of that House.

1 **SEC. 6. POWERS.**

2 (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such
3 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such
4 testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission
5 considers advisable to carry out the purposes of this Act.

6 (b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The
7 chairman of the Commission may secure directly from any
8 department or agency of the Federal Government such in-
9 formation as the chairman of the Commission considers
10 necessary to carry out the duties under this Act. Upon
11 request of the chairman of the Commission, the head of
12 such department or agency shall furnish such information
13 expeditiously to the Commission.

14 (c) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Commission may
15 contract with and compensate government and private
16 agencies or persons for supplies or services, without regard
17 to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5).

18 **SEC. 7. MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.**

19 (a) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use
20 the United States mails in the same manner and under
21 the same conditions as other departments and agencies of
22 the Federal Government.

23 (b) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and
24 dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

25 (c) MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—
26 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of

1 Defense shall, upon the request of the chairman of the
2 Commission, furnish the Commission, on a reimbursable
3 basis, such administrative and support services as the
4 Commission may require.

5 **SEC. 8. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

6 (a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
8 graph (2), each member of the Commission shall be
9 compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent
10 of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level
11 IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of
12 title 5, United States Code, for each day (including
13 travel time) during which such member is engaged
14 in performing the duties of the Commission.

15 (2) PROHIBITION OF COMPENSATION OF FED-
16 ERAL EMPLOYEES.—Members of the Commission
17 who are full-time officers or employees of the United
18 States or Members of Congress may not receive ad-
19 ditional pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of
20 their service on the Commission.

21 (b) TRAVEL.—Members and personnel of the Com-
22 mission may travel on military aircraft, military vehicles,
23 or other military conveyances when travel is necessary in
24 the performance of a duty of the Commission except when
25 the cost of commercial transportation is less expensive.

1 (c) STAFF.—

2 (1) APPOINTMENT.—The chairman of the Com-
3 mission may appoint, without regard to civil service
4 laws and regulations, an executive director and such
5 additional personnel as may be necessary to carry
6 out the duties of the Commission.

7 (2) PREFERENCE TO VETERANS.—

8 (A) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The executive
9 director of the Commission shall be a veteran.

10 (B) ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL.—In ap-
11 pointing additional personnel to the Commis-
12 sion, the chairman shall give preference to vet-
13 erans.

14 (3) COMPENSATION OF STAFF.—The chairman
15 of the Commission may fix the compensation of the
16 executive director and additional personnel without
17 regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and sub-
18 chapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States
19 Code, relating to classification of positions and Gen-
20 eral Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay
21 for the executive director and additional personnel
22 may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the
23 Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

24 (d) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Upon
25 request of the chairman of the Commission, the head of

1 any department or agency of the Federal Government may
2 detail, on a nonreimbursable basis, any personnel of the
3 department or agency to the Commission to assist the
4 Commission in carrying out its duties under this Act.

5 (e) **PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-**
6 **TENT SERVICES.**—The chairman of the Commission may
7 procure temporary and intermittent services under section
8 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individ-
9 uals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual
10 rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive
11 Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

12 **SEC. 9. FUNDING.**

13 Of the amounts appropriated for the Department of
14 Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 1997 or subsequent fiscal
15 years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make avail-
16 able to the Commission such amounts as the chairman of
17 the Commission certifies to the Secretary as necessary for
18 the Commission to carry out its duties under this Act.

19 **SEC. 10. TERMINATION.**

20 The Commission shall terminate 30 days after the
21 date of the termination of the temporary demonstration
22 projects under section 4(c).

○