

107<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 5576

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a pilot program to be conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to assess the benefits of establishing a nurse preceptor program.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 8, 2002

Mr. LYNCH introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a pilot program to be conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to assess the benefits of establishing a nurse preceptor 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 “Department of Vet-  
5        erans Affairs Nurse Preceptor Pilot Program Act”.

6        **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7        Congress finds the following:

1           (1) The number of nurses retiring in the next  
2           10 years is expected to far exceed the number of  
3           new nurses joining the workforce, resulting in a na-  
4           tionwide nursing shortage.

5           (2) This shortage will certainly affect health  
6           care facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs,  
7           which, like many other health care facilities, are al-  
8           ready seeing a shrinking pool of highly trained  
9           nurses.

10          (3) Nursing care is vital to providing the best  
11          patient care possible and, as the nursing shortage  
12          worsens, care for veterans who have sacrificed much  
13          for the liberties and freedoms enjoyed by the Amer-  
14          ican people will suffer.

15 **SEC. 3. NURSE PRECEPTOR PILOT PROGRAM WITHIN THE**  
16 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

17          (a) IN GENERAL.—

18           (1) PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Vet-  
19           erans Affairs shall conduct a pilot program to assess  
20           the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a  
21           nurse preceptor program at Department of Veterans  
22           Affairs health care facilities.

23           (2) NATURE OF PROGRAM.—The nurse pre-  
24           ceptor pilot program shall consist of a rigorous  
25           training program to develop nurse preceptors who

1 will act as mentors to newly hired registered nurses  
2 at Department of Veterans Affairs health care facili-  
3 ties.

4 (b) STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM.—The nurse preceptor  
5 program shall include the following:

6 (1) For registered nurses interested in becom-  
7 ing preceptors, Intensive training and screening pro-  
8 grams.

9 (2) For registered nurses selected to be nurse  
10 preceptors—

11 (A) continuous professional development  
12 classes; and

13 (B) an annual salary increase equal to 5  
14 percent of gross annual salary.

15 (c) INTERIM REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Each cal-  
16 endar year after the date of the enactment of this Act  
17 until the termination of the pilot program, the Secretary  
18 of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on  
19 Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Rep-  
20 resentatives a report on the effectiveness and usefulness  
21 of the nurse preceptor pilot program.

22 (d) LOCATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The nurse pre-  
23 ceptor pilot program shall be conducted through health  
24 care facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs lo-  
25 cated in the service region of the Veterans Health Admin-

1 istration designated as Veterans Integrated Service Net-  
2 work 1 (“VISN 1”).

3 (e) DURATION OF PROGRAM.—The pilot program  
4 shall be conducted during the two-year period beginning  
5 on the date of the enactment of this Act.

6 (f) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the  
7 end of the pilot program under this section, the Secretary  
8 shall submit to Congress a final report on the pilot pro-  
9 gram. The Secretary shall include in the report the fol-  
10 lowing:

11 (1) The Secretary’s assessment of the benefits  
12 to veterans of the pilot program.

13 (2) The Secretary’s assessment of the effect of  
14 the pilot program on the Department of Veterans  
15 Affairs, including the effect on retention of a quali-  
16 fied nursing staff.

17 (3) Any other findings and conclusions of the  
18 Secretary with respect to the pilot program.

19 (4) Any recommendations of the Secretary for  
20 continuation of the pilot program or for extension of  
21 the pilot program to other service regions or to all  
22 service regions.

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