

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3052

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand the capability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the medical care needs of veterans in southern New Jersey.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 23, 2005

Mr. LOBIONDO (for himself, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. ANDREWS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand the capability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the medical care needs of veterans in southern New Jersey.

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 “Southern New Jersey
5 Veterans Comprehensive Health Care Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; DEFINITION.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The current and future health care needs of
2 veterans residing in the eight southern counties of
3 New Jersey are not being fully met by the Depart-
4 ment of Veterans Affairs.

5 (2) Travel times for southern New Jersey vet-
6 erans to existing Department of Veterans Affairs
7 health care facilities in Pennsylvania and Delaware
8 fall within the Department of Veterans Affairs
9 health planning criteria, but those criteria fail to
10 recognize that the area is largely rural and its road-
11 ways are congested, creating significant access bar-
12 riers to veterans in need of care and thereby result-
13 ing in suppressed demand for care.

14 (3) Projections of future growth in demand for
15 health care by veterans in southern New Jersey sup-
16 port sustainable enrollment of veterans needing De-
17 partment of Veterans Affairs health care.

18 (4) The number of veterans residing in south-
19 ern New Jersey is increasing as more veterans retire
20 in the area and new veterans seek services in the
21 wake of large-scale deployments of National Guard
22 and Reservists from the area. According to United
23 States census data, the veteran population in the
24 eight counties of southern New Jersey is greater
25 than 235,000.

1 (5) By the end of 2004, 62 percent of the serv-
2 ing members of the New Jersey National Guard will
3 have been deployed on active duty in support of the
4 global war on terror and will be eligible for enroll-
5 ment in the Department of Veterans Affairs health
6 care system.

7 (b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this Act, the term
8 “southern New Jersey” means the following counties of
9 the State of New Jersey: Ocean, Burlington, Camden,
10 Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Atlantic, and Cape May.

11 **SEC. 3. MEDICAL CARE FOR VETERANS IN SOUTHERN NEW**
12 **JERSEY.**

13 (a) DETERMINATION.—Not later than March 15,
14 2006, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall determine,
15 and notify Congress pursuant to subsection (b), whether
16 the needs of veterans in southern New Jersey for full-serv-
17 ice medical care shall be met—

18 (1) through a project for a public-private ven-
19 ture to provide inpatient and outpatient services and
20 long-term care to veterans at an existing facility in
21 southern New Jersey; or

22 (2) through a project for construction of a new
23 full-service, 100-bed Department of Veterans Affairs
24 medical center in southern New Jersey.

1 (b) NOTIFICATION AND PROSPECTUS.—Not later
2 than March 15, 2006, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
3 shall submit to Congress a report—

4 (1) identifying which of the two options speci-
5 fied in subsection (a) has been selected by the Sec-
6 retary; and

7 (2) providing, for the option selected, a pro-
8 spectus that includes, at a minimum, the matter
9 specified in paragraphs (1) through (8) of section
10 8104(b) of title 38, United States Code, and the
11 project time lines.

12 **SEC. 4. PUBLIC-PRIVATE VENTURE FOR MEDICAL CARE**
13 **FOR VETERANS IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY.**

14 (a) PROJECT.—If the option selected by the Sec-
15 retary of Veterans Affairs under section 3(a) is the option
16 specified in paragraph (1) of that section for a project for
17 a public-private venture to provide inpatient and out-
18 patient services and long-term care to veterans at an exist-
19 ing facility in southern New Jersey, then the Secretary
20 shall, subject to the availability of appropriations for such
21 purpose, take such steps as necessary to enter into an
22 agreement with an appropriate private-sector entity to
23 provide for inpatient and outpatient services and long-
24 term care for veterans at an existing facility in southern
25 New Jersey. Such an agreement may include provision for

1 construction of a new wing or other addition at such facil-
2 ity to provide additional services that will, under the
3 agreement, be leased by the United States and dedicated
4 to care and treatment of veterans by the Secretary under
5 title 38, United States Code.

6 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
7 authorized to be appropriated such sums as necessary for
8 a public-private venture project under this section.

9 **SEC. 5. NEW DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MED-**
10 **ICAL CENTER, SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY.**

11 (a) PROJECT AUTHORIZATION.—If the option se-
12 lected by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section
13 3(a) is the option specified in paragraph (2) of that section
14 for a project for construction of a new full-service, 100-
15 bed Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in
16 southern New Jersey, then the Secretary shall, subject to
17 the availability of appropriations for such purpose, carry
18 out a major medical facility construction project for con-
19 struction in southern New Jersey of a 100-bed medical
20 facility providing inpatient and outpatient services and
21 long-term care. Such facility shall be located in the county
22 in southern New Jersey that the Secretary determines
23 most suitable to meet the health care needs of veterans
24 in the region.

1 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to the Construction, Major
3 Projects, account of the Department of Veterans Affairs,
4 in addition to any other amounts authorized for that ac-
5 count, the amount of \$120,000,000 for the project author-
6 ized by subsection (a).

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