

109TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1191

To establish a grant program to provide innovative transportation options to veterans in remote rural areas.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 7, 2005

Mr. SALAZAR introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To establish a grant program to provide innovative transportation options to veterans in remote rural areas.

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 “VetsRide Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress makes the following findings:

7 (1) For many veterans living in rural areas in  
8 the United States, the nearest Department of Vet-  
9 erans Affairs medical center is hundreds of miles  
10 away.

1           (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs has  
2           been unable to adequately provide care for veterans  
3           due to budgetary constraints. In 2004, the Depart-  
4           ment of Veterans Affairs set a goal to build 156 new  
5           community-based outpatient clinics by 2012. Budget  
6           shortfalls have slowed the building of new clinics and  
7           many service networks have postponed opening new  
8           clinics indefinitely or reduced staffing at existing  
9           clinics.

10           (3) State veteran service officers and private  
11           veteran service organizations have moved in to fill  
12           the void, providing critically needed transportation  
13           services to veterans in rural remote areas. These  
14           services are especially important to elderly and in-  
15           firm veterans who do not have other transportation  
16           options.

17           (4) Although such ad hoc veterans travel pro-  
18           grams have community support, many suffer from  
19           chronic underfunding. Relatively small investments  
20           in transportation services can result in significantly  
21           better care for our Nation's most vulnerable vet-  
22           erans.

23 **SEC. 3. TRANSPORTATION GRANTS FOR RURAL VETERANS**  
24 **SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS.**

25           (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans  
2           Affairs shall establish a grant program to provide in-  
3           novative transportation options to veterans in remote  
4           rural areas.

5           (2) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants awarded under  
6           this section may be used by State veterans' service  
7           officers and veterans service organizations to—

8                   (A) assist veterans to travel to Department  
9                   of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and

10                   (B) otherwise assist in providing medical  
11                   care to veterans in remote rural areas.

12           (3) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The Secretary may  
13           not award a grant under this section in an amount  
14           in excess of \$50,000.

15           (4) NO MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—Grant re-  
16           cipients under this section shall not be required to  
17           provide matching funds as a condition for receiving  
18           such a grant.

19           (b) RULEMAKING.—The Secretary shall prescribe  
20           regulations for—

21                   (1) evaluating grant applications under this sec-  
22                   tion; and

23                   (2) otherwise administering the program estab-  
24                   lished by this section.

1           (c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “veterans  
2 service organization” means any organization recognized  
3 by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation  
4 of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States  
5 Code.

6           (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
7 are authorized to be appropriated \$3,000,000 for each of  
8 fiscal years 2006 through 2010 to carry out this Act.

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