

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2189

To require pre- and post-deployment mental health screenings for members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 7, 2007

Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. PASTOR, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Ms. CASTOR, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. STARK, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. CARSON, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. TOWNS, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. TIERNEY, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mrs. JONES of Ohio) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 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 require pre- and post-deployment mental health screenings for members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

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 “Sgt. Jonathan Schulze
5 Military Health Services Improvement Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) More than 250,000 United States
4 servicemembers are serving their country in Oper-
5 ation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Free-
6 dom.

7 (2) There currently are more than 100,000 ac-
8 tivated National Guard and reserve component
9 forces engaged in the war on terrorism.

10 (3) According to the Department of Veterans
11 Affairs, nearly one in three veterans who served in
12 Operation Iraqi Freedom sought mental health care
13 within one year after their return from combat in
14 Iraq or Afghanistan.

15 (4) The Department of Defense reports that
16 more than 10 percent of all medical evacuations
17 from Iraq and Afghanistan are for mental health
18 reasons. The Department of Veterans Affairs has al-
19 ready seen and diagnosed more than 73,000 vet-
20 erans with a mental health condition at Veterans Af-
21 fairs hospitals, and more than 144,000 were pro-
22 vided mental health counseling for post-combat read-
23 justment problems.

24 (5) The stigma associated with mental health
25 treatment remains a significant obstacle to seeking
26 mental health care and the Department of Defense

1 has not yet instituted a meaningful antistigma cam-
2 paign.

3 (6) Untreated post-traumatic stress disorder
4 and other mental health illnesses have been linked to
5 severe social problems, including alcohol and drug
6 abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, familial dis-
7 integration, and homelessness.

8 **SEC. 3. PRE- AND POST-DEPLOYMENT SCREENING PRO-**
9 **GRAM FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED**
10 **FORCES.**

11 (a) PRE- AND POST-DEPLOYMENT EVALUATIONS.—
12 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment
13 of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall prescribe in
14 regulations—

15 (1) a requirement that members of the Armed
16 Forces deploying to a combat theater receive a men-
17 tal health evaluation conducted in person by a quali-
18 fied mental health professional before their deploy-
19 ment; and

20 (2) a requirement that members of the Armed
21 Forces returning from service of more than 30 days
22 in a combat theater or who were injured in a combat
23 theater receive a combat stress evaluation conducted
24 in person by a qualified mental health professional

1 within 30 days after the date on which the member
2 returns from the combat theater.

3 (b) MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS PROGRAM.—

4 (1) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Defense shall
5 implement a program designed to—

6 (A) raise awareness about mental health
7 issues that members of the Armed Forces and
8 their families may encounter during and after
9 deployment of the member; and

10 (B) reduce the stigma associated with
11 mental health care.

12 (2) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary, pursu-
13 ant to regulations, may enter into arrangements
14 with an accredited college, university, hospital-based,
15 or community-based mental health center to carry
16 out the program under this subsection. The Sec-
17 retary shall ensure that the program is made avail-
18 able in foreign languages if necessary to aid com-
19 prehension among persons to be helped by the pro-
20 gram.

21 (3) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall carry out
22 this subsection not later than 180 days after the
23 date of the enactment of this Act.

24 (c) HOLD-HARMLESS FOR MENTAL HEALTH TREAT-
25 MENT.—In carrying out any mental health-related pro-

1 gram, the Secretary shall ensure that inquiries about men-
2 tal health services shall not adversely affect an individual's
3 career.

4 **SEC. 4. MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS FOR DEPENDENTS.**

5 (a) PROGRAM.—Not later than one year after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense
7 shall develop a program to improve awareness of the avail-
8 ability of mental health services for, and warning signs
9 about mental health problems in, dependents of members
10 of the Armed Forces whose sponsor served or will serve
11 in a combat theater during the previous or next 60 days.

12 (b) MATTERS COVERED.—The program developed
13 under subsection (a) shall be designed to—

14 (1) increase awareness of mental health services
15 available to dependents of members of the Armed
16 Forces on active duty;

17 (2) increase awareness of mental health services
18 available to dependents of Reservists and National
19 Guard members whose sponsors have been activated;
20 and

21 (3) increase awareness of mental health issues
22 that may arise in dependents referred to in para-
23 graphs (1) and (2) whose sponsor is deployed to a
24 combat theater.

1 (c) TOLL-FREE NUMBER.—In carrying out this sec-
2 tion, the Secretary of Defense shall establish a toll-free
3 informational telephone number and website devoted to
4 helping members of the Armed Forces and their depend-
5 ents recognize, and locate treatment providers for, post-
6 traumatic stress disorder and other forms of combat
7 stress.

8 (d) COORDINATION.—The Secretary may permit the
9 Department of Defense to coordinate the program devel-
10 oped under subsection (a) with an accredited college, uni-
11 versity, hospital-based, or community-based mental health
12 center or engage mental health professionals to develop
13 programs to help implement this section.

14 (e) AVAILABILITY IN OTHER LANGUAGES.—The Sec-
15 retary shall ensure that the program developed under sub-
16 section (a) is made available in foreign languages if nec-
17 essary to aid comprehension among persons to be helped
18 by the program.

19 **SEC. 5. IMPROVED COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DEPART-**
20 **MENT OF DEFENSE AND THE DEPARTMENT**
21 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

22 (a) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—Not later
23 than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,
24 the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans
25 Affairs shall enter into a memorandum of understanding

1 to improve the transition of mental health-related cases
2 from the Department of Defense to the Department of
3 Veterans Affairs.

4 (b) MATTERS COVERED.—The memorandum of un-
5 derstanding under subsection (a) shall specifically include
6 requirements—

7 (1) that the Department of Defense report to
8 the Department of Veterans Affairs any case or sus-
9 pected case of post-traumatic stress disorder, or
10 other disorders or symptoms that result from deploy-
11 ment to a combat theater, in a member of the
12 Armed Forces upon the member's discharge from
13 the Armed Forces;

14 (2) that the Department of Defense report to
15 the Department of Veterans Affairs any disciplinary
16 measures taken against a member of the Armed
17 Forces during or after service in a combat theater
18 upon the member's discharge from the Armed
19 Forces; and

20 (3) that the Department of Defense and the
21 Department of Veterans Affairs ensure that a mem-
22 ber of the Armed Forces who is discharged for rea-
23 sons relating to mental health is automatically en-
24 rolled by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in the pa-
25 tient enrollment system under section 1705 of title

1 38, United States Code, and classified in the same
2 manner as a veteran with a service-connected dis-
3 ability rated 50 percent or greater for purposes of
4 determining such discharged member's priority cat-
5 egory under such system.

6 (c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
7 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense
8 shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation
9 of this section.

10 **SEC. 6. PILOT PROGRAM RELATING TO COMBAT STRESS.**

11 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
12 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
13 implement a pilot program specifically designed to treat
14 female victims of combat stress, including post-traumatic
15 stress disorder.

16 **SEC. 7. CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION RELATING TO**
17 **COMBAT STRESS TREATMENT PROFES-**
18 **SIONALS.**

19 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
20 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall create
21 an information clearinghouse to improve the availability
22 of information about mental health professionals who treat
23 combat stress.

1 **SEC. 8. AVAILABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**
2 **UNDER TRICARE FOR CERTAIN RESERVE**
3 **MEMBERS AFTER DEACTIVATION.**

4 (a) **AVAILABILITY.**—The Secretary of Defense shall
5 prescribe regulations to provide for the availability of men-
6 tal health services under the TRICARE program under
7 chapter 55 of title 10, United States Code, for an eligible
8 member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces and
9 the family members of the member, during the 48-month
10 period following the date of termination of the member’s
11 service in the reserve component.

12 (b) **ELIGIBILITY.**—For purposes of this section, a
13 member of a reserve component is eligible if—

14 (1) the member was called or ordered to active
15 duty for a period of more than 30 days under a pro-
16 vision of law referred to in section 101(a)(13)(B) of
17 title 10, United States Code; and

18 (2) the member served continuously on active
19 duty for 90 or more days in a combat zone pursuant
20 to such call or order or was injured at any time in
21 a combat zone during such active duty.

22 **SEC. 9. DEFINITION.**

23 In this Act, the term “qualified mental health profes-
24 sional” means—

1 (1) an accredited psychologist, psychiatrist,
2 child psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse, or clinical social
3 worker; or

4 (2) a student seeking a post-graduate degree in
5 one of the following mental health-related fields: psy-
6 chiatry, psychology, psychiatric nursing, or clinical
7 social work.

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