

Union Calendar No. 100

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2199

[Report No. 110-166]

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide certain improvements in the treatment of individuals with traumatic brain injuries, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 8, 2007

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

MAY 23, 2007

Additional sponsors: Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. HARE, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HODES, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. BOREN, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. SOUDER, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. SPRATT

MAY 23, 2007

Reported with amendments, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Omit the part struck through and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide certain improvements in the treatment of individuals with traumatic brain injuries, 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 “Traumatic Brain In-

5 jury Health Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act of

6 2007”.

7 **SEC. 2. SCREENING, REHABILITATION, AND TREATMENT**
8 **FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.**

9 (a) SCREENING, REHABILITATION, AND TREATMENT
10 FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 of title 38,
12 United States Code, is amended by adding at the
13 end the following new subchapter:

14 “SUBCHAPTER IX—TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY
15 “§ 1791. **Screening for traumatic brain injuries**

16 “(a) SCREENING PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall es-

17 tablish a program to screen veterans who are eligible for

18 hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care

1 under section 1710(e)(1)(D) of this title for symptoms of
2 traumatic brain injury.

3 “(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the
4 date of the enactment of this section, and annually there-
5 after, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on
6 Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Rep-
7 resentatives a report containing the following information:

8 “(1) The number of veterans screened under
9 the program during the year preceding such report.

10 “(2) The prevalence of traumatic brain injury
11 symptoms among the veterans screened under the
12 program.

13 “(3) Recommendations for improving care and
14 services to veterans exhibiting symptoms of trau-
15 matic brain injury.

16 **“§ 1792. Comprehensive program for long-term trau-**
17 **matic brain injury rehabilitation**

18 “(a) COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM.—The Secretary
19 shall develop and carry out a comprehensive program of
20 long-term care for post-acute traumatic brain injury reha-
21 bilitation that includes residential, community, and home-
22 based components utilizing interdisciplinary treatment
23 teams.

24 “(b) LOCATION OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall
25 carry out the program developed under subsection (a) in

1 four geographically dispersed polytrauma network sites
2 designated by the Secretary.

3 “(c) ELIGIBILITY.—A veteran is eligible for care
4 under the program developed under subsection (a) if the
5 veteran is otherwise eligible for care under this chapter
6 and—

7 “(1) served on active duty in a theater of com-
8 bat operations (as determined by the Secretary in
9 consultation with the Secretary of Defense) during a
10 period of war after the Persian Gulf War, or in com-
11 bat against a hostile force during a period of hos-
12 tilities (as defined in section 1712A(a)(2)(B) of this
13 title) after November 11, 1998;

14 “(2) is diagnosed as suffering from moderate to
15 severe traumatic brain injury; and

16 “(3) is unable to manage routine activities of
17 daily living without supervision or assistance.

18 “(d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the
19 date of the enactment of this section, and annually there-
20 after, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on
21 Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Rep-
22 resentatives a report containing the following information:

23 “(1) A description of the operation of the pro-
24 gram.

1 “(2) The number of veterans provided care
2 under the program during the year preceding such
3 report.

4 “(3) The annual cost of operating the program.

5 **“§ 1793. Traumatic brain injury transition offices**

6 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
7 lish a traumatic brain injury transition office at each De-
8 partment polytrauma network site for the purposes of co-
9 ordinating the provision of health-care and services to vet-
10 erans who suffer from moderate to severe traumatic brain
11 injuries and are in need of health-care and services not
12 immediately offered by the Department.

13 “(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary,
14 through each such office established under subsection (a),
15 shall have the authority to arrange for the provision of
16 health-care and services through cooperative agreements
17 with appropriate public or private entities that have estab-
18 lished long-term neurobehavioral rehabilitation and recov-
19 ery programs.

20 **“§ 1794. Traumatic brain injury registry**

21 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish
22 and maintain a registry to be known as the ‘Traumatic
23 Brain Injury Veterans’ Health Registry’ (in this section
24 referred to as the ‘Registry’).

1 “(b) DESCRIPTION.—The Registry shall include the
2 following information:

3 “(1) A list containing the name of each indi-
4 vidual who served as a member of the Armed Forces
5 in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi
6 Freedom who exhibits symptoms associated with
7 traumatic brain injury and who—

8 “(A) applies for care and services from the
9 Department under this chapter; or

10 “(B) files a claim for compensation under
11 chapter 11 of this title on the basis of any dis-
12 ability which may be associated with such serv-
13 ice; and

14 “(2) any relevant medical data relating to the
15 health status of an individual described in paragraph
16 (1) and any other information the Secretary con-
17 siders relevant and appropriate with respect to such
18 an individual if the individual—

19 “(A) grants permission to the Secretary to
20 include such information in the Registry; or

21 “(B) is deceased at the time such indi-
22 vidual is listed in the Registry.

23 “(c) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall notify indi-
24 viduals listed in the Registry of significant developments
25 in research on the health consequences of military service

1 in the Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi
2 Freedom theaters of operations.

3 **“§ 1795. Centers for traumatic brain injury research,**
4 **education, and clinical activities**

5 “(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to
6 provide for the improvement of the provision of health care
7 to eligible veterans with traumatic brain injuries
8 through—

9 “(1) the conduct of research (including research
10 on improving facilities of the Department concen-
11 trating on traumatic brain injury care and on im-
12 proving the delivery of traumatic brain injury care
13 by the Department);

14 “(2) the education and training of health care
15 personnel of the Department; and

16 “(3) the development of improved models and
17 systems for the furnishing of traumatic brain injury
18 care by the Department.

19 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTERS.—(1) The Sec-
20 retary shall establish and operate centers for traumatic
21 brain injury research, education, and clinical activities.
22 Such centers shall be established and operated by collabo-
23 rating Department facilities as provided in subsection
24 (c)(1). Each such center shall function as a center for—

25 “(A) research on traumatic brain injury;

1 “(B) the use by the Department of specific
2 models for furnishing traumatic brain injury care;

3 “(C) education and training of health-care pro-
4 fessionals of the Department; and

5 “(D) the development and implementation of
6 innovative clinical activities and systems of care with
7 respect to the delivery of traumatic brain injury care
8 by the Department.

9 “(2) The Secretary shall, upon the recommendation
10 of the Under Secretary for Health, designate the centers
11 under this section. In making such designations, the Sec-
12 retary shall ensure that the centers designated are located
13 in various geographic regions of the United States. The
14 Secretary may designate a center under this section only
15 if—

16 “(A) the proposal submitted for the designation
17 of the center meets the requirements of subsection
18 (c);

19 “(B) the Secretary makes the finding described
20 in subsection (d); and

21 “(C) the peer review panel established under
22 subsection (e) makes the determination specified in
23 subsection (e)(3) with respect to that proposal.

24 “(3) Not more than five centers may be designated
25 under this section.

1 “(4) The authority of the Secretary to establish and
2 operate centers under this section is subject to the appro-
3 priation of funds for that purpose.

4 “(c) PROPOSALS FOR DESIGNATION OF CENTERS.—
5 A proposal submitted for the designation of a center under
6 this section shall—

7 “(1) provide for close collaboration in the estab-
8 lishment and operation of the center, and for the
9 provision of care and the conduct of research and
10 education at the center, by a Department facility or
11 facilities in the same geographic area which have a
12 mission centered on traumatic brain injury care and
13 a Department facility in that area which has a mis-
14 sion of providing tertiary medical care;

15 “(2) provide that no less than 50 percent of the
16 funds appropriated for the center for support of clin-
17 ical care, research, and education will be provided to
18 the collaborating facility or facilities that have a
19 mission centered on traumatic brain injury care; and

20 “(3) provide for a governance arrangement be-
21 tween the collaborating Department facilities which
22 ensures that the center will be established and oper-
23 ated in a manner aimed at improving the quality of
24 traumatic brain injury care at the collaborating fa-

1 cility or facilities which have a mission centered on
2 traumatic brain injury care.

3 “(d) FINDING OF SECRETARY.—The finding referred
4 to in subsection (b)(2)(B) with respect to a proposal for
5 designation of a site as a location of a center under this
6 section is a finding by the Secretary, upon the rec-
7 ommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, that the
8 facilities submitting the proposal have developed (or may
9 reasonably be anticipated to develop) each of the following:

10 “(1) An arrangement with an accredited med-
11 ical school that provides education and training in
12 traumatic brain injury care and with which one or
13 more of the participating Department facilities is af-
14 filiated under which medical residents receive edu-
15 cation and training in traumatic brain injury care
16 through regular rotation through the participating
17 Department facilities so as to provide such residents
18 with training in the diagnosis and treatment of trau-
19 matic brain injury.

20 “(2) An arrangement under which nursing, so-
21 cial work, counseling, or allied health personnel re-
22 ceive training and education in traumatic brain in-
23 jury care through regular rotation through the par-
24 ticipating Department facilities.

1 “(3) The ability to attract scientists who have
2 demonstrated achievement in research—

3 “(A) into the evaluation of innovative ap-
4 proaches to the design of traumatic brain injury
5 care; or

6 “(B) into the causes, prevention, and
7 treatment of traumatic brain injury.

8 “(4) The capability to evaluate effectively the
9 activities of the center, including activities relating
10 to the evaluation of specific efforts to improve the
11 quality and effectiveness of traumatic brain injury
12 care provided by the Department at or through indi-
13 vidual facilities.

14 “(e) PEER REVIEW PANEL.—(1) In order to provide
15 advice to assist the Secretary and the Under Secretary for
16 Health to carry out their responsibilities under this sec-
17 tion, the official within the central office of the Veterans
18 Health Administration responsible for traumatic brain in-
19 jury care shall establish a peer review panel to assess the
20 scientific and clinical merit of proposals that are sub-
21 mitted to the Secretary for the designation of centers
22 under this section.

23 “(2) The panel shall consist of experts in the fields
24 of traumatic brain injury research, education and training,

1 and clinical care. Members of the panel shall serve as con-
2 sultants to the Department.

3 “(3) The panel shall review each proposal submitted
4 to the panel by the official referred to in paragraph (1)
5 and shall submit to that official its views on the relative
6 scientific and clinical merit of each such proposal. The
7 panel shall specifically determine with respect to each such
8 proposal whether that proposal is among those proposals
9 which have met the highest competitive standards of sci-
10 entific and clinical merit.

11 “(4) The panel shall not be subject to the Federal
12 Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

13 “(f) AWARD OF FUNDING.—Clinical and scientific in-
14 vestigation activities at each center established under this
15 section—

16 “(1) may compete for the award of funding
17 from amounts appropriated for the Department of
18 Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research
19 account; and

20 “(2) shall receive priority in the award of fund-
21 ing from such account insofar as funds are awarded
22 to projects and activities relating to traumatic brain
23 injury.

24 “(g) DISSEMINATION OF USEFUL INFORMATION.—
25 The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that infor-

1 mation produced by the research, education and training,
2 and clinical activities of centers established under this sec-
3 tion that may be useful for other activities of the Veterans
4 Health Administration is disseminated throughout the
5 Veterans Health Administration. Such dissemination shall
6 be made through publications, through programs of con-
7 tinuing medical and related education provided through
8 regional medical education centers under subchapter VI
9 of chapter 74 of this title, and through other means. Such
10 programs of continuing medical education shall receive
11 priority in the award of funding.

12 “(h) SUPERVISION OF CENTERS.—The official within
13 the central office of the Veterans Health Administration
14 responsible for traumatic brain injury care shall be re-
15 sponsible for supervising the operation of the centers es-
16 tablished pursuant to this section and shall provide for
17 ongoing evaluation of the centers and their compliance
18 with the requirements of this section.

19 “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1)
20 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Depart-
21 ment of Veterans Affairs for the basic support of the re-
22 search and education and training activities of centers es-
23 tablished pursuant to this section such sums as may be
24 necessary.

1 “(2) In addition to funds appropriated for a fiscal
2 year pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in
3 paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Health shall allo-
4 cate to such centers from other funds appropriated for
5 that fiscal year generally for the Department of Veterans
6 Affairs medical services account and the Department of
7 Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account
8 such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health deter-
9 mines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this sec-
10 tion.

11 “(j) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than February 1
12 of each of year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
13 submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Sen-
14 ate and House of Representatives a report on the status
15 and activities of the centers for traumatic brain injury re-
16 search, education, and clinical activities during the pre-
17 ceding fiscal year. Each such report shall include the fol-
18 lowing:

19 “(1) A description of the activities carried out
20 at each center and the funding provided by the De-
21 partment for such activities.

22 “(2) A description of the advances made at
23 each of the participating facilities of the center in
24 research, education and training, and clinical activi-

1 ties relating to traumatic brain injury care and
2 treatment.

3 “(3) A description of the actions taken by the
4 Under Secretary for Health pursuant to subsection
5 (g) to disseminate information derived from such ac-
6 tivities throughout the Veterans Health Administra-
7 tion.

8 “(4) The evaluation of the Secretary as to the
9 effectiveness of the centers in fulfilling the purposes
10 of this section.

11 “(k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1)
12 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Depart-
13 ment of Veterans Affairs for the basic support of the re-
14 search and education and training activities of centers es-
15 tablished pursuant to this section amounts as follows:

16 “(A) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2008.

17 “(B) \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2009
18 through 2011.

19 “(2) In addition to funds appropriated for a fiscal
20 year pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in
21 paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Health shall allo-
22 cate to such centers from other funds appropriated for
23 that fiscal year generally for the Department of Veterans
24 Affairs medical services account and the Department of
25 Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account

1 such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health deter-
2 mines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this sec-
3 tion.

4 **“§ 1796. Committee on Care of Veterans with Trau-
5 matic Brain Injury**

6 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
7 lish in the Veterans Health Administration a committee
8 to be known as the ‘Committee on Care of Veterans with
9 Traumatic Brain Injury’. The Under Secretary for Health
10 shall appoint employees of the Department with expertise
11 in the care of veterans with traumatic brain injury to serve
12 on the committee.

13 “(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE.—The com-
14 mittee shall assess, and carry out a continuing assessment
15 of, the capability of the Veterans Health Administration
16 to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation needs
17 of veterans with traumatic brain injury. In carrying out
18 that responsibility, the committee shall—

19 “(1) evaluate the care provided to such veterans
20 through the Veterans Health Administration;

21 “(2) identify systemwide problems in caring for
22 such veterans in facilities of the Veterans Health
23 Administration;

24 “(3) identify specific facilities within the Vet-
25 erans Health Administration at which program en-

1 richment is needed to improve treatment and reha-
2 bilitation of such veterans; and

3 “(4) identify model programs which the com-
4 mittee considers to have been successful in the treat-
5 ment and rehabilitation of such veterans and which
6 should be implemented more widely in or through fa-
7 cilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

8 “(c) ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—The com-
9 mittee shall—

10 “(1) advise the Under Secretary regarding the
11 development of policies for the care and rehabilita-
12 tion of veterans with traumatic brain injury; and

13 “(2) make recommendations to the Under Sec-
14 retary—

15 “(A) for improving programs of care of
16 such veterans at specific facilities and through-
17 out the Veterans Health Administration;

18 “(B) for establishing special programs of
19 education and training relevant to the care of
20 such veterans for employees of the Veterans
21 Health Administration;

22 “(C) regarding research needs and prior-
23 ities relevant to the care of such veterans; and

24 “(D) regarding the appropriate allocation
25 of resources for all such activities.

1 “(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than June 1 of
2 2008, and each subsequent year, the Secretary shall sub-
3 mit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate
4 and House of Representatives a report on the implementa-
5 tion of this section. Each such report shall include the fol-
6 lowing for the calendar year preceding the year in which
7 the report is submitted:

8 “(1) A list of the members of the committee.

9 “(2) The assessment of the Under Secretary for
10 Health, after review of the initial findings of the
11 committee, regarding the capability of the Veterans
12 Health Administration, on a systemwide and facility-
13 by-facility basis, to meet effectively the treatment
14 and rehabilitation needs of veterans with traumatic
15 brain injury.

16 “(3) The plans of the committee for further as-
17 sessments.

18 “(4) The findings and recommendations made
19 by the committee to the Under Secretary for Health
20 and the views of the Under Secretary on such find-
21 ings and recommendations.

22 “(5) A description of the steps taken, plans
23 made (and a timetable for the execution of such
24 plans), and resources to be applied toward improving
25 the capability of the Veterans Health Administration

1 to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation
2 needs of veterans with traumatic brain injury.”.

3 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of con-
4 tents at the beginning of such chapter is amended
5 by adding at the end the following new items:

“SUBCHAPTER IX—TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

“1791. Screening for traumatic brain injuries.

“1792. Comprehensive program for long-term traumatic brain injury rehabilita-
tion.

“1793. Traumatic brain injury transition offices.

“1794. Traumatic brain injury registry.

“1795. Centers for traumatic brain injury research, education, and clinical ac-
tivities.

“1796. Committee on Care of Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury.”.

6 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Secretary shall imple-
7 ment the requirements of subchapter IX of title 38,
8 United States Code, as added by subsection (a), not later
9 than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

10 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM FOR DELIVERY OF READJUST-**
11 **MENT COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH**
12 **SERVICES CERTAIN SERVICES TO VETERANS**
13 **THROUGH MOBILE VET CENTERS.**

14 (a) PILOT PROGRAM.—Chapter 17 of title 38, United
15 States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1712B
16 the following new section:

1 **“§ 1712C. Pilot program for delivery of readjustment**
 2 **counseling and mental health services**
 3 **through mobile Vet Centers *Pilot pro-***
 4 ***gram for delivery of certain services***
 5 ***through mobile vet centers***

6 “(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—To improve access to mental
 7 health services in rural areas, the Secretary shall carry
 8 out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall pro-
 9 vide ~~readjustment counseling and related mental health~~
 10 ~~services~~ *readjustment counseling, related mental health*
 11 *services, benefits outreach, and, to the extent practicable, as-*
 12 *sistance with claims for benefits under this title* through
 13 the use of mobile centers (as that term is defined in sec-
 14 tion 1712A(i)(1)), to be known as ‘mobile Vet Centers’.
 15 In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall de-
 16 termine the most effective manner in which to operate the
 17 mobile Vet Centers.

18 “(b) SCOPE AND LOCATION.—(1) The Secretary shall
 19 establish two mobile Vet Centers in each of the following
 20 five Veterans Integrated Service Networks:

21 “(A) Veterans Integrated Service Network

22 1.

23 “(B) Veterans Integrated Service Network

24 16.

25 “(C) Veterans Integrated Service Network

26 19.

1 “(D) Veterans Integrated Service Network
2 20.

3 “(E) Veterans Integrated Service Network
4 23.

5 “(2) Within each Veterans Integrated Service Net-
6 work under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall determine
7 the area to be serviced by each mobile Vet Center. In mak-
8 ing that determination, the Secretary shall give priority
9 to areas in which limited mental health *and outreach* serv-
10 ices are available.

11 “(3) If the Secretary determines that mobile Vet Cen-
12 ters in addition to such centers required under paragraph
13 (1) are warranted, the Secretary may establish additional
14 mobile Vet Centers and may establish such centers in Vet-
15 erans Integrated Service Networks other than the Vet-
16 erans Integrated Service Networks referred to in that
17 paragraph. Upon such a determination by the Secretary,
18 the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Veterans’ Af-
19 fairs of the Senate and House of Representatives of such
20 determination.

21 “(c) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out a
22 pilot program under this section shall terminate on the
23 date that is three years after the date of the enactment
24 of this section.

1 “(d) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date
2 on which the pilot program terminates under subsection
3 (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Vet-
4 erans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives
5 a report on the pilot program. Such report shall describe
6 how the Secretary established and carried out the pilot
7 program and include an evaluation of the Secretary of the
8 benefits and disadvantages of providing ~~readjustment~~
9 ~~counseling and related mental health services~~ *readjustment*
10 *counseling, related mental health services, benefits outreach,*
11 *and claims assistance* through the use of mobile Vets Cen-
12 ters.

13 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
15 \$7,500,000 for fiscal year 2008 and each subsequent fiscal
16 year.”.

17 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
18 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
19 after the item related to section 1712B the following new
20 item:

~~“1712C. Pilot program for delivery of readjustment counseling and mental health services through mobile Vet Centers. 1712C. Pilot program for delivery of certain services through mobile Vet Centers.”.~~

1 **SEC. 4. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RURAL VETERANS.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE.—Subchapter
3 III of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amend-
4 ed by adding at the end the following new section:

5 **“§ 546. Advisory Committee on Rural Veterans**

6 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall es-
7 tablish an advisory committee to be known as the ‘Advi-
8 sory Committee on Rural Veterans’ (hereinafter in this
9 section referred to as ‘the Committee’).

10 “(2)(A) The Committee shall consist of members ap-
11 pointed by the Secretary from the general public, includ-
12 ing—

13 “(i) representatives of rural veterans;

14 “(ii) individuals who are recognized authorities
15 in fields pertinent to the needs of rural veterans, in-
16 cluding specific or unique health-care needs of rural
17 veterans and access issues of rural veterans;

18 “(iii) individuals who have expertise in the de-
19 livery of mental health care in rural areas;

20 “(iv) individuals who have expertise in the deliv-
21 ery of long-term care in rural areas;

22 “(v) at least one veterans service organization
23 representative from a rural State; and

24 “(vi) representatives of rural veterans with
25 service-connected disabilities.

1 “(B) The Committee shall include, as ex officio mem-
2 bers—

3 “(i) the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
4 ices (or a representative of the Secretary of Health
5 and Human Services designated by that Secretary);

6 “(ii) the Director of the Indian Health Service
7 (or a representative of that Director); and

8 “(iii) the Under Secretary for Health and the
9 Under Secretary for Benefits, or their designees.

10 “(C) The Secretary may invite representatives of
11 other departments and agencies of the United States to
12 participate in the meetings and other activities of the
13 Committee.

14 “(3) The Secretary shall determine the number,
15 terms of service, and pay and allowances of members of
16 the Committee appointed by the Secretary, except that a
17 term of service of any such member may not exceed three
18 years. The Secretary may reappoint any such member for
19 additional terms of service.

20 “(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE.—The Sec-
21 retary shall, on a regular basis, consult with and seek the
22 advice of the Committee with respect to the administration
23 of benefits by the Department for rural veterans, reports
24 and studies pertaining to rural veterans, and the needs

1 of rural veterans with respect to primary care, mental
2 health care, and long-term care needs of rural veterans.

3 “(c) REPORT.—(1) Not later than September 1 of
4 each odd-numbered year until 2013, the Committee shall
5 submit to the Secretary a report on the programs and ac-
6 tivities of the Department that pertain to rural veterans.

7 Each such report shall include—

8 “(A) an assessment of the needs of rural vet-
9 erans with respect to primary care, mental health
10 care, and long-term care needs of rural veterans and
11 other benefits and programs administered by the
12 Department;

13 “(B) a review of the programs and activities of
14 the Department designed to meet such needs; and

15 “(C) such recommendations (including rec-
16 ommendations for administrative and legislative ac-
17 tion) as the Committee considers appropriate.

18 “(2) The Secretary shall, within 60 days after receiv-
19 ing each report under paragraph (1), submit to Congress
20 a copy of the report, together with any comments con-
21 cerning the report that the Secretary considers appro-
22 priate.

23 “(3) The Committee may also submit to the Sec-
24 retary such other reports and recommendations as the
25 Committee considers appropriate.

1 “(4) The Secretary shall submit with each annual re-
2 port submitted to Congress pursuant to section 529 of this
3 title a summary of all reports and recommendations of the
4 Committee submitted to the Secretary since the previous
5 annual report of the Secretary submitted pursuant to that
6 section.”.

7 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
8 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding
9 at the end the following new item:

“546. Advisory Committee on Rural Veterans.”.

Union Calendar No. 100

110TH CONGRESS
1ST Session

H. R. 2199

[Report No. 110-166]

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide certain improvements in the treatment of individuals with traumatic brain injuries, and for other purposes.

MAY 23, 2007

Reported with amendments, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed