S. 1272

To establish the National Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 2, 2007

Mr. Chambliss (for himself, Mr. Coleman, Ms. Klobuchar, and Mr. Isakson) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To establish the National Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Yellow Ribbon Re-
integration Program Act of 2007”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL GUARD YELLOW RIBBON REINTEGRA-
TION PROGRAM.

(a) Establishment.—The Secretary of Defense, in
coordination with the Chief of the National Guard Bureau,
shall establish a national combat veteran reintegration
program to provide National Guard members and their
families with sufficient information, services, referral, and
proactive outreach opportunities throughout the entire de-
ployment cycle. This program shall be known as the Yel-
low Ribbon Reintegration Program.

(b) PURPOSE.—The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration
Program shall consist of informational events and activi-
ties for Reserve Component members, their families, and
community members through the four phases of the de-
ployment cycle:

(1) Pre-deployment.

(2) Deployment.

(3) Demobilization.

(4) Post-deployment-reconstitution.

(c) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary and National
Guard Bureau Chief shall consult with the following par-
ties during establishment of the program:

(1) The Adjutant General of the Minnesota Na-
tional Guard and officials associated with the State’s
“Beyond the Yellow Ribbon” Reintegration Pro-
gram.

(2) Adjutants General of the remaining 53
States and territories.

(d) ORGANIZATION.—
(1) **EXECUTIVE AGENT.**—The Secretary shall designate the National Guard Bureau as the Department of Defense executive agent for the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

(2) **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE FOR REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The National Guard Bureau shall establish the Office for Reintegration Programs within the National Guard Bureau Joint Staff. This office shall administer all reintegration programs in coordination with State National Guard organizations.

(B) **OFFICE COMPOSITION.**—The Office for Reintegration Programs shall consist of six full-time National Guard Bureau personnel to administer the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. The office shall be responsible for coordination with existing National Guard family and support programs. The Directors of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard may appoint liaison officers to work with the permanent office staff. The office shall closely coordinate with the Army National Guard and Air National Guard Directorates for Manpower and Personnel with respect to existing family sup-
port structure, mobilization schedules, training
schedules, training plans and programs, and
any other personnel issues.

(3) ADVISORY BOARD.—

(A) APPOINTMENT.—The Chief of the Na-
tional Guard Bureau shall appoint an advisory
board to analyze and report areas of success
and areas for necessary improvements. The ad-
visory board shall include, but is not limited to,
the Director of the Army National Guard, the
Director of the Air National Guard, the Assist-
ant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs,
an Adjutant General on a rotational basis as
determined by the Chief of the National Guard
Bureau, the Director of the National Guard
Bureau Manpower and Personnel Directorate
(J–1), and any other Department of Defense,
Federal Government agency, or outside organi-
ization as determined by the Chief of the Na-
tional Guard Bureau. The members of the advi-
sory board may designate representatives in
their stead.

(B) SCHEDULE.—The advisory board shall
meet on a schedule as determined by the Chief
of the National Guard Bureau.
(C) Reporting requirement.—The advisory board shall issue internal reports as necessary and shall submit an initial report to the Committees on Armed Services not later than 180 days after the end of a one-year period from establishment of the Office for Reintegration Programs. This report shall contain—

(i) an evaluation of the reintegration program’s implementation by State National Guard organizations;

(ii) an assessment of any unmet resource requirements;

(iii) an assessment of the reintegration program’s inclusion of other Reserve Component service members and the necessity for further expansion to incorporate all the Reserve Components; and

(iv) recommendations regarding closer coordination between the Office of Reintegration Programs and State National Guard organizations.

The advisory board shall submit annual reports to the Committees on Armed Services following this initial report by the first week in March.
(4) Establishment of a Center for Excellence in Reintegration.—The Chief shall establish a Center for Excellence in Reintegration. The Center shall collect and analyze “lessons learned” and suggestions from State National Guard organizations with existing or developing reintegration programs. The Center shall also assist in developing training aids and briefing materials and training representatives from State National Guard organizations.

(5) State Deployment Cycle Support Teams.—The Office for Reintegration Programs shall employ 270 full-time employees to administer the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program at the State level. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau shall assign State Deployment Cycle Support Team members based on State need, geographical dispersion, and military population. The Office for Reintegration Programs is encouraged to employ wounded service members and returning combat veterans whenever possible. The primary function of team members should be—

(A) developing and managing the re-integration curriculum;
(B) contracting and recruiting for necessary service providers; and

(C) ensuring that providers’ skills adapt to the unique military nature of the reintegration program.

(e) PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office for Reintegration Programs shall analyze the demographics, placement of State Family Assistance Centers (FAC), and FAC resources before a mobilization alert is issued to affected State National Guard organizations. The Office of Reintegration Programs shall consult with affected State National Guard organizations following the issuance of a mobilization alert and implement the reintegration events in accordance with the Reintegration Program phase model.

(2) PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE.—The Pre-Deployment Phase shall constitute the time from first notification of mobilization until deployment of the mobilized National Guard unit. Events and activities shall focus on providing education and ensuring the readiness of service members, families, and communities for the rigors of a combat deployment and shall include the following:

(A) Service member readiness.
(B) Marriage counseling.

(C) Youth counseling.

(D) Family counseling.

(E) Single service member counseling.

(F) Information on resources available to service members and families.

(G) Introduction to the Military OneSource program.

(H) Department of Veterans Affairs resources.

(I) Small business planning.

(J) Financial planning and education.

(3) DEPLOYMENT PHASE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Deployment Phase shall constitute the period from deployment of the mobilized National Guard unit until the unit arrives at a demobilization station inside the continental United States. Events and services provided shall focus on the challenges and stress associated with separation and having a service member in a combat zone. Events and services include support activities listed in subparagraph (B) and reintegration preparation activities listed in subparagraph (C). Information sessions should utilize State National
Guard resources in coordination with the Employer Support of Guard and Reserve Office, Transition Assistance Advisors, and the State Family Programs Director.

(B) SUPPORT ACTIVITIES.—

(i) Youth counseling.

(ii) Family counseling.

(iii) Community outreach.

(iv) Continued contact with spouses and parents.

(v) Information on resources available to family members, to include access to Military OneSource and child care.

(vi) TRICARE and healthcare.

(vii) Military pay and allowances.

(C) REINTEGRATION PREPARATION ACTIVITIES.—

(i) FAMILY INFORMATION SESSIONS.—Family information sessions should prepare family members for the homecoming of their service member and to inform them on what they can do to make this transition as easy as possible. The sessions are designed to increase the family member’s knowledge of the re-
integration process and to provide re-
sources to them as they go through the
steps of reintegration. Information sessions
should be offered at locations and times so
as to accommodate as many family mem-
bers as possible.

(ii) COMMUNITY INFORMATION SES-
SIONS.—The Community information ses-
sessions should educate community leaders,
clergy, schools, employers, mental health
professionals, and family readiness groups
(FRG) about the challenges of reintegra-
tion, and what they can do to assist com-
bat veterans and their families to success-
fully reintegrate back into the community.
Information sessions should be offered at
locations and times so as to accommodate
as many participants as possible.

(4) DEMOBILIZATION PHASE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Demobilization
Phase shall constitute the period from arrival of
the National Guard unit at the demobilization
station until its departure for home station. In
the interest of returning service members as
soon as possible to their home stations, re-
integration briefings during the Demobilization Phase shall be minimized. State Deployment Cycle Support Teams are encouraged, however, to assist demobilizing service members in enrolling in the Department of Veterans Affairs system using form 1010EZ during the Demobilization Phase. State Deployment Cycle Support Teams may provide other events from the Initial Reintegration Activity as determined by the State National Guard organizations. Remaining events shall be conducted during the Post-Deployment-Reconstitution Phase.

(B) INITIAL REINTEGRATION ACTIVITY.—

The purpose of this reintegration program is to educate service members about the resources that are available to them and to connect service members to service providers who can assist them in overcoming the challenges of reintegration. The Initial Reintegration Activity should include, but is not limited to—

(i) informing service members of their veterans’ benefits;

(ii) assisting with unemployment and enrollment in employment transition services;
(iii) a driver safety briefing given by qualified law enforcement officials;

(iv) identification of high-risk service members and establishment of plans for follow-on care;

(v) identification of service members requiring follow-on health care;

(vi) legal briefings and legal assistance; and

(vii) an opportunity for sexual assault victims to confidentially report such crimes.

(5) **Post-deployment-reconstitution phase.**—

(A) **In general.**—The Post-Deployment-Reconstitution Phase shall constitute the period from arrival at home station until 180 days following demobilization. Activities and services provided shall focus on reconnecting service members with their families and communities and providing resources and information necessary for successful reintegration. Reintegration events shall begin with elements of the Initial Reintegration Activity program that were not completed during the Demobilization Phase.
(B) 30-DAY, 60-DAY, AND 90-DAY RE-INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES.—The State National Guard organizations shall hold reintegration activities at the 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day interval following demobilization. These activities shall focus on reconnecting service members and family members with the service providers from Initial Reintegration Activity to ensure service members and their families understand what benefits they are entitled to and what resources are available to help them overcome the challenges of reintegration. The Reintegration Activities should also provide a forum for service members and families to address negative behaviors related to combat stress and transition. One of the Reintegration Activities shall be for service members only to conduct a thorough Post-Deployment Health Re-Assessment (PDHRA) of combat veterans and provide any remaining medical or dental services. Activities, events, and services provided at the 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day Reintegration Activities shall include, but not be limited to—

(i) PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES.—
(I) Battlemind Training II for service members and their families.

(II) Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) Marriage Enrichment Workshop to focus on assisting service members to reconnect with their spouses.

(III) Single service member challenges workshop.

(IV) Parenting workshop to assist service members to reconnect with their children.

(V) Local services station program with representatives from legal, TRICARE, Education Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, State Veterans Centers, State Workforce offices, chaplain’s office, County Veterans Service Officers, Military OneSource, State tax officials, State Youth Programs, and National Guard unit administration offices.

(VI) Anger management workshop.

(VII) Substance abuse workshop.
(VIII) Gambling abuse workshop.

(IX) Law enforcement briefing.

(X) TRICARE and Military OneSource representatives.

(XI) PDHRA with on-site support from Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, State veterans’ office representatives, and case managers provided by the Department of Defense.

(XII) Periodic Health Assessment (PHA), if not provided during the Demobilization Phase.

(XIII) Hearing audiogram, if not provided during the Demobilization Phase.

(XIV) Dental examination, if not provided during the Demobilization Phase.

(XV) Tuberculosis test.

(XVI) Reintegration program assessment.

(XVII) Completion of any pending personnel or administrative actions.
(ii) SERVICE MEMBER PAY.—Service members shall receive appropriate pay for days spent attending the Reintegration Activities.

(C) MONTHLY INDIVIDUAL REINTEGRATION PROGRAM.—The Office for Reintegration Programs, in coordination with State National Guard organizations, shall offer a monthly reintegration program for individual service members released from active duty or formerly in a medical hold status. The program shall focus on the special needs of this service member subset and the Office for Reintegration Programs shall develop an appropriate program of services and information.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the purpose of carrying out this section, there are authorized to be appropriated $23,000,000 for subsection (d) and such sums as may be necessary for subsection (e).