''(2) Services described in paragraph (1) that are delivered to very low-income veteran families who are homeless and who are scheduled to become residents of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of housing suitable for permanent housing.

''(3) Services described in paragraph (1) for very low-income veteran families who have voluntarily chosen to seek other housing after a period of tenancy in permanent housing, that are provided, for a period of 90 days after such families exit permanent housing or until such families commence receipt of other housing services adequate to meet their current needs, but only to the extent that services under this paragraph are designed to support such families in their choice to transition into housing that is responsive to their individual needs and preferences.

''(c) APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—(1) An eligible entity seeking financial assistance under subsection (a) shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor in such form, in such manner, and containing such commitments and information as the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out this section.

''(2) Each application submitted by an eligible entity under paragraph (1) shall contain—

''(A) a description of the supportive services proposed to be provided by the eligible entity and the identified needs for those services;

''(B) a description of the types of very low-income veteran families proposed to be provided such services;

''(C) an estimate of the number of very low-income veteran families proposed to be provided such services;

''(D) evidence of the experience of the eligible entity in providing supportive services to very low-income veteran families; and

''(E) a description of the managerial capacity of the eligible entity—

''(i) to coordinate the provision of supportive services with the provision of permanent housing by the eligible entity or by other organizations;

''(ii) to assess continuously the needs of very low-income veteran families for supportive services;

''(iii) to coordinate the provision of supportive services with the services of the Department;

''(iv) to tailor supportive services to the needs of very low-income veteran families; and

''(v) to seek continuously new sources of assistance to ensure the long-term provision of supportive services to very low-income veteran families.

''(3) The Secretary shall establish criteria for the selection of eligible entities to be provided financial assistance under this section.

''(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—(1) The Secretary shall provide training and technical assistance to participating eligible entities regarding the planning, development, and provision of supportive services to very low-income veteran families occupying permanent housing, through the Technical Assistance grants program in section 2064 of this title.

''(2) The Secretary may provide the training described in paragraph (1) directly or through grants or contracts with appropriate public or nonprofit private entities.

''(e) FUNDING.—(1) From amounts appropriated to the Department for Medical Services, there shall be available to carry out subsection (a), (b), and (c) amounts as follows:

''(A) $15,000,000 for fiscal year 2009.

''(B) $20,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.

''(C) $25,000,000 for fiscal year 2011.

''(2) Not more than $750,000 may be available under paragraph (1) in any fiscal year to provide technical assistance under subsection (d).

''(3) There is authorized to be appropriated $1,000,000 for each of the fiscal year 2008 through 2010 to carry out the provisions of subsection (d).

''(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'consumer cooperative' has the meaning given such term in section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (12 U.S.C. 1701q).

''(2) The term 'eligible entity' means—

''(A) a private nonprofit organization; or

''(B) a consumer cooperative.

''(3) The term 'homeless' has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302).

''(4) The term 'permanent housing' means community-based housing without a designated length of stay.

''(5) The term 'private nonprofit organization' means any of the following:

''(A) Any incorporated private institution or foundation—

''(i) no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any member, founder, contributor, or individual;

''(ii) which has a governing board that is responsible for the operation of the supportive services provided under this section; and

''(iii) which is approved by the Secretary as to financial responsibility.

''(B) A for-profit limited partnership, the sole general partner of which is an organization meeting the requirements of clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of subparagraph (A).

''(C) A corporation wholly owned and controlled by an organization meeting the requirements of clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of subparagraph (A).

''(D) A tribally designated housing entity (as defined in section 4 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103)).

''(6)(A) Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), the term 'very low-income veteran family' means a veteran family whose income does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for an area specified by the Secretary for purposes of this section, as determined by the Secretary in accordance with this paragraph.

''(B) The Secretary shall make appropriate adjustments to the income requirement under subparagraph (A) based on family size.

''(C) The Secretary may establish an income ceiling higher or lower than 50 percent of the median income for an area if the Secretary determines that such variations are necessary because the area has unusually high or low construction costs, fair market rents (as determined under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f)), or family incomes.

''(7) The term 'veteran family' includes a veteran who is a single person and a family in which the head of household or the spouse of the head of household is a veteran.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 20 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2043 the following new item:

''2044. Financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.''.

(c) STUDY OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PERMANENT HOUSING PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For fiscal years 2009 and 2010, the Secretary shall conduct a study of the effectiveness of the permanent housing program under section 2044 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (b), in meeting the needs of very low-income veteran families, as that term is defined in that section.

(2) COMPARISON.—In the study required by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall compare the results of the program referred to in that subsection with other programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs dedicated to the delivery of housing and services to veterans.

(3) CRITERIA.—In making the comparison required in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall examine the following:

(A) The satisfaction of veterans targeted by the programs described in paragraph (2).

(B) The health status of such veterans.

(C) The housing provided such veterans under such programs.

(D) The degree to which such veterans are encouraged to productive activity by such programs.

(4) REPORT.—Not later than March 31, 2011, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the results of the study required by paragraph (1).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 3, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 3, 2008, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 3, 2008, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 3, 2008, at 10 a.m., in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Kellen McAnulty, an intern in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this work period.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Sara Sanders of my staff be granted the privilege of the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Duncan Hill of my staff be allowed floor privileges for the remainder of this debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Sophie Trads from my staff be granted floor privileges for the duration of my remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, on behalf of Senator CARDIN, that Michael Morgan, a fellow from his office, be granted the privilege of the floor for the duration of the debate on S. 3036.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STAR PRINT—S. 2307

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that S. 2307, the Global Change Research Improvement Act of 2007, be star printed with the changes at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH AND OTHER CARE IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2008

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 632, S. 2162.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2162) to improve the treatment and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with an amendment, as follows:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Veterans Mental Health Improvements Act of 2008''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Sec. 101. Findings on substance use disorders and mental health.

Sec. 102. Expansion of substance use disorder treatment services provided by Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 103. Care for veterans with mental health and substance use disorders.

Sec. 104. National centers of excellence on post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders.

Sec. 105. Report on residential mental health care facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

Sec. 106. Tribute to Justin Bailey.

TITLE II—MENTAL HEALTH ACCESSIBILITY ENHANCEMENTS

Sec. 201. Pilot program on peer outreach and support for veterans and use of community mental health centers and Indian Health Service facilities.

TITLE III—RESEARCH

Sec. 301. Research program on comorbid post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders.

Sec. 302. Extension of authorization for Special Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

TITLE IV—ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES OF VETERANS

Sec. 401. Clarification of authority of Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide mental health services to families of veterans.

Sec. 402. Pilot program on provision of readjustment and transition assistance to veterans and their families in cooperation with Vet Centers.

TITLE I—SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

SEC. 101. FINDINGS ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND MENTAL HEALTH.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) More than 1,500,000 members of the Armed Forces have been deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The 2005 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Active Duty Personnel reports that 23 percent of members of the Armed Forces on active duty acknowledge a significant problem with alcohol use, with similar rates of acknowledged problems with alcohol use among members of the National Guard.

(2) The effects of substance abuse are wide ranging, including significantly increased risk of suicide, exacerbation of mental and physical health disorders, breakdown of family support, and increased risk of unemployment and homelessness.

(3) While veterans suffering from mental health conditions, chronic physical illness, and polytrauma may be at increased risk for development of a substance use disorder, treatment for these veterans is complicated by the need to address adequately the physical and mental symptoms associated with these conditions through appropriate medical intervention.

(4) While the Veterans Health Administration has dramatically increased health services for veterans from 1996 through 2006, the number of veterans receiving specialized substance abuse treatment services decreased 18 percent during that time. No comparable decrease in the national rate of substance abuse has been observed during that time.

(5) While some facilities of the Veterans Health Administration provide exemplary substance use disorder treatment services, the availability of such treatment services throughout the health care system of the Veterans Health Administration is inconsistent.

(6) According to the Government Accountability Office, the Department of Veterans Affairs significantly reduced its substance use disorder treatment and rehabilitation services between 1996 and 2006, and has made little progress since in restoring these services to their pre-1996 levels.

SEC. 102. EXPANSION OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT SERVICES PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure the provision of such services and treatment to each veteran enrolled in the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is in need of services and treatments for a substance use disorder as follows:

(1) Short term motivational counseling services.

(2) Intensive outpatient or residential care services.

(3) Relapse prevention services.

(4) Ongoing aftercare and outpatient counseling services.

(5) Opiate substitution therapy services.

(6) Pharmacological treatments aimed at reducing craving for drugs and alcohol.

(7) Detoxification and stabilization services.

(8) Such other services as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(b) PROVISION OF SERVICES.—The services and treatments described in subsection (a) may be provided to a veteran described in such subsection—

(1) at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers or clinics;

(2) by referral to other facilities of the Department that are accessible to such veteran; or

(3) by contract or fee-form service payments with community-based organizations for the provision of such services and treatments.

(c) ALTERNATIVES IN CASE OF SERVICES DENIED DUE TO CLINICAL NECESSITY.—If the Secretary denies the provision to a veteran of services or treatment for a substance use disorder due to clinical necessity, the Secretary shall provide the veteran such other services or treatments as are medically appropriate.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth, for each medical facility of the Department, the availability of the following:

(1) Medically supervised withdrawal management.

(2) Programs for treatment of alcohol and other substance use disorders that are—

(A) integrated with primary health care services; or

(B) available as specialty substance use disorder services.

(3) Specialty programs for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder.

(4) Programs to treat veterans who are diagnosed with both a substance use disorder and a mental health disorder.

SEC. 103. CARE FOR VETERANS WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary of Veterans Affairs provides a veteran inpatient or outpatient care for a substance use disorder and a comorbid mental health disorder, the Secretary shall ensure that treatment for such disorders is provided concurrently—

(1) through a service provided by a clinician or health professional who has training and expertise in treatment of substance use disorders and mental health disorders;

(2) by separate substance use disorder and mental health disorder treatment services when there is appropriate coordination, collaboration, and care management between such treatment services; or

(3) by a team of clinicians with appropriate expertise.

(b) TEAM OF CLINICIANS WITH APPROPRIATE EXPERTISE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''team of clinicians with appropriate expertise'' means a team consisting of the following:

(1) Clinicians and health professionals with expertise in treatment of substance use disorders