

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 5385

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a toll-free hotline to assist mental health professionals at institutions of higher learning, to provide training to mental health professionals at institutions of higher learning, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 25, 2010

Mr. CARNEY (for himself and Mr. KIRK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a toll-free hotline to assist mental health professionals at institutions of higher learning, to provide training to mental health professionals at institutions of higher learning, 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 “Student Veteran Coun-
5 seling Improvement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. COUNSELING FOR STUDENT VETERANS WITH MEN-**
2 **TAL HEALTH CONDITIONS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 36 of title 38, United
4 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
5 lowing new section:

6 **“SEC. 3697B. ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING FOR MENTAL AND**
7 **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.**

8 “(a) HOTLINE FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFES-
9 SIONALS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—(1)
10 Subject to the availability of appropriations for such pur-
11 pose, the Secretary shall establish a toll-free telephone
12 number to provide mental and behavioral health profes-
13 sionals with the information described in paragraph (2).

14 “(2) The information described in this paragraph is
15 information related to the treatment and counseling of a
16 veteran reporting or exhibiting symptoms of—

17 “(A) post-traumatic stress disorder;

18 “(B) traumatic brain injury;

19 “(C) anxiety;

20 “(D) depression;

21 “(E) sexual assault;

22 “(F) sexual trauma;

23 “(G) readjustment disorder; or

24 “(H) other service-connected mental health con-
25 ditions.

1 “(3) The Secretary shall ensure that a licensed men-
2 tal health counselor employed by the Department of Vet-
3 erans Affairs operates the hotline and provides the infor-
4 mation described in paragraph (2).

5 “(4) The Secretary shall ensure that the hotline is
6 operational during business hours each weekday (other
7 than Saturdays and Federal holidays).

8 “(5) In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary
9 shall—

10 “(A) notify each institution of higher learning
11 of the hotline by mail; and

12 “(B) provide information regarding the hotline
13 on the Internet website of the Department of Vet-
14 erans Affairs.

15 “(b) TRAINING MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
16 PROFESSIONALS.—(1) Subject to the availability of appro-
17 priations for such purpose, the Secretary of Veterans Af-
18 fairs shall provide mental and behavioral health profes-
19 sionals at each institution of higher learning with training
20 on the information described in paragraph (2) of sub-
21 section (a).

22 “(2) The Secretary shall ensure that the training
23 under paragraph (1)—

1 “(A) is provided by a licensed psychiatrist, li-
2 censed psychologist, or licensed counselor employed
3 by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

4 “(B) is provided to mental and behavioral
5 health professionals at least once every two years.

6 “(3) The Secretary may not pay a reporting fee under
7 section 3684(c) of this title to an institution of higher
8 learning with at least 100 veterans enrolled at such insti-
9 tution unless a mental and behavioral health professional
10 of such institution receives training provided by the Sec-
11 retary under paragraph (1).

12 “(c) BIENNIAL REPORTS.—Not later than October 1
13 of each even-numbered year, the Secretary of Veterans Af-
14 fairs shall submit to Congress a report on mental and be-
15 havioral health professionals. Each such report shall in-
16 clude the following:

17 “(1) The number of institutions of higher learn-
18 ing that employ a mental and behavioral health pro-
19 fessional who has received training under subsection
20 (b).

21 “(2) The number of veterans who have died by
22 suicide while enrolled in an institution of higher
23 learning.

24 “(3) The number of calls received by the hot-
25 line.

1 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 “(1) The term ‘mental and behavioral health
3 professional’ means a licensed psychiatrist, licensed
4 psychologist, or licenced counselor employed by an
5 institution of higher learning.

6 “(2) The term ‘institution of higher learning’
7 has the meaning given that term in section 3452(f)
8 of this title.

9 “(3) The term ‘hotline’ means the toll-free tele-
10 phone number established under subsection (a).”.

11 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (c) of
12 section 3684 of such title is amended by striking “The
13 Secretary” and inserting “Subject to section 3697B(b)(3)
14 of this title, the Secretary”.

15 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
16 at the beginning of chapter 36 of title 38, United States
17 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“3697B. Assistance and training for mental and behavioral health profes-
sionals.”.

18 (d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 3697B of title 38,
19 United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take
20 effect on the date that is one year after the date of the
21 enactment of this Act.

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