

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 666

To require a report on the establishment of a Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or Polytrauma Network Site of the Department of Veterans Affairs in the northern Rockies or Dakotas, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 29, 2011

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. CONRAD, and Mr. TESTER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require a report on the establishment of a Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or Polytrauma Network Site of the Department of Veterans Affairs in the northern Rockies or Dakotas, 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 “Veterans Traumatic
5 Brain Injury Care Improvement Act of 2011”.

1 **SEC. 2. REPORT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLYTRAUMA**
2 **REHABILITATION CENTER OR POLYTRAUMA**
3 **NETWORK SITE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF**
4 **VETERANS AFFAIRS IN THE NORTHERN**
5 **ROCKIES OR DAKOTAS.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
7 ings:

8 (1) The States of the northern Rockies and the
9 Dakotas are among those States in the United
10 States with the highest per capita rates of veterans
11 with injuries from military service in Iraq and Af-
12 ghanistan.

13 (2) Traumatic brain injury (TBI) has become
14 known as one of the “signature wounds” of military
15 service in Iraq and Afghanistan due to its high oc-
16 currence among veterans of such service.

17 (3) A recent RAND Corporation study esti-
18 mates that as many as 20 percent of the veterans
19 of military service in Iraq and Afghanistan have a
20 traumatic brain injury as a result of such service,
21 and many of these veterans require ongoing care for
22 mild, moderate, or severe traumatic brain injury.

23 (4) The Department of Veterans Affairs rec-
24 ommends that all veterans experiencing a
25 polytraumatic injury be referred to a Polytrauma
26 Rehabilitation Center or a Polytrauma Network Site.

1 (5) The Department of Veterans Affairs
2 Polytrauma System of Care includes 4 Polytrauma
3 Rehabilitation Centers and 22 Polytrauma Network
4 Sites, none of which are located in North Dakota,
5 South Dakota, Idaho, Montana, eastern Washington,
6 or Wyoming, an area that encompasses approxi-
7 mately 740,000 square miles.

8 (6) The vastness of this area imposes signifi-
9 cant hardships on veterans residing in this area who
10 require care within the Department of Veterans Af-
11 fairs Polytrauma System of Care and wish to live
12 close to home while receiving care within such sys-
13 tem of care.

14 (b) REPORT.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
16 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
17 retary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress
18 a report on the feasibility and advisability of estab-
19 lishing a Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or
20 Polytrauma Network Site for the Department of
21 Veterans Affairs in the northern Rockies or the Da-
22 kotas. One of the locations evaluated as a potential
23 location for the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or
24 Polytrauma Network Site, as the case may be, shall

1 be the Fort Harrison Department of Veterans Af-
2 fairs hospital in Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

3 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The report required by
4 this subsection shall include the following:

5 (A) An assessment of the adequacy of ex-
6 isting Department of Veterans Affairs facilities
7 in the northern Rockies and the Dakotas to ad-
8 dress matters that are otherwise addressed by
9 Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers and
10 Polytrauma Network Sites.

11 (B) A comparative assessment of the effec-
12 tiveness of rehabilitation programs for individ-
13 uals with traumatic brain injuries in urban
14 areas with the effectiveness of such programs
15 for individuals with traumatic brain injuries in
16 rural and frontier communities.

17 (C) An assessment whether the low cost of
18 living in the northern Rockies and the Dakotas
19 could reduce the financial stress faced by vet-
20 erans receiving care for traumatic brain injury
21 and their families and thereby improve the ef-
22 fectiveness of such care.

23 (D) An assessment whether therapies that
24 can prevent or remediate the development of
25 secondary neurologic conditions related to trau-

1 matic brain injury can be interrupted by stress
2 caused by living in an urban area.

3 (3) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall con-
4 sult with appropriate State and local government
5 agencies in the northern Rockies and the Dakotas in
6 preparing the report required by this subsection.

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