

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2145

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans program to seek to employ physicians at the Department of Veterans Affairs on a without compensation basis in practice areas and specialties with staffing shortages and long appointment waiting times.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 30, 2015

Mr. CULBERSON (for himself, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. THORNBERRY, and Mr. FARENTHOLD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans program to seek to employ physicians at the Department of Veterans Affairs on a without compensation basis in practice areas and specialties with staffing shortages and long appointment waiting times.

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 “Physician Ambas-  
5        sadors Helping Veterans Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PHYSICIAN AMBASSADORS HELPING VETERANS**  
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 74 of title  
4 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after sec-  
5 tion 7405 the following new section:

6 **“§ 7405A. Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans**  
7 **program**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use the au-  
9 thority under section 7405 of this title to seek to employ  
10 physicians on a without compensation basis in any prac-  
11 tice area or speciality for which—

12 “(1) the average waiting time for veterans seek-  
13 ing an appointment with a physician in such practice  
14 area or specialty exceeds the waiting time goals es-  
15 tablished by the Department; or

16 “(2) the medical facility of the Department  
17 where the physician will be employed has dem-  
18 onstrated staffing shortages, as determined by the  
19 Secretary.

20 “(b) VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS.—There shall be in  
21 each medical facility of the Department a volunteer coordi-  
22 nator. The volunteer coordinator for a medical facility  
23 shall—

24 “(1) seek to establish relationships with medical  
25 associations serving the area where the facility is lo-  
26 cated;

1           “(2) recruit physicians for employment on a  
2           without compensation basis in the facility; and

3           “(3) serve as the initial point of contact for  
4           physicians seeking employment on a without com-  
5           pensation basis in the facility.

6           “(c) QUALIFICATIONS.—A physician employed on a  
7           without compensation basis under this section shall agree,  
8           as a condition of being granted a credential or privilege  
9           to practice medicine in a medical facility of the Depart-  
10          ment, to commit to serving a minimum of 40 hours in  
11          the facility during the one-year period beginning on the  
12          date on which such credential or privilege is granted.

13          “(d) CREDENTIALING PROCESS.—(1) The Secretary  
14          shall ensure that each physician who seeks employment  
15          at the Department on a without compensation basis under  
16          this section receives a credential or privilege to practice  
17          medicine in the Department, or a decision that such a cre-  
18          dential or privilege will not be granted, by not later than  
19          60 days after the date on which the physician requests  
20          such credential or privilege.

21          “(2) The director of a medical facility of the Depart-  
22          ment shall approve, and accept the services of, any physi-  
23          cian who meets the qualifications under subsection (c) and  
24          receives a credential or privilege to practice medicine in  
25          the facility under paragraph (1).

1       “(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—(1) Not later than March 31  
2 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee  
3 on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations  
4 of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and  
5 the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-  
6 resentatives a report on physicians employed on a without  
7 compensation basis at the Department under this section.

8       “(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1)  
9 shall include, for the year preceding the year during which  
10 the report is submitted, each of the following:

11           “(A) The number of physicians employed on a  
12 without compensation basis under this section by the  
13 Department in each of the Veterans Integrated  
14 Service Networks.

15           “(B) Information about staffing levels and ap-  
16 pointment waiting times for facilities located in each  
17 such Veterans Integrated Service Network.

18       “(f) TREATMENT OF PHYSICIANS IN ANNUAL STAFF-  
19 ING DETERMINATION.—Any physician employed on a  
20 without compensation basis under this section shall not  
21 be considered in determining under section 7412(a) of this  
22 title whether there is a staffing shortage throughout the  
23 Department with respect to a particular occupation.”.

24       (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
25 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting

- 1 after the item relating to section 7405 the following new
- 2 item:

“7405A. Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans program.”

