

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3936

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 22, 2016

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary carries out Veteran Engagement Team events where veterans can complete claims for disability compensation and pension under the laws administered by the Secretary, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veteran Engagement
3 Teams Act” or “VET Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**

5 **AFFAIRS VETERAN ENGAGEMENT TEAM**
6 **EVENTS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—

8 (1) PILOT PROGRAM.—Beginning not later than
9 October 1, 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
10 shall carry out a 3-year pilot program under which
11 the Secretary shall carry out events, to be known as
12 “Veteran Engagement Team events”. The Secretary
13 shall ensure that such events are carried out—

14 (A) during the first year during which the
15 Secretary carries out the pilot program, at least
16 once a month in a location within the jurisdic-
17 tion of each of 10 regional offices of the De-
18 partment of Veterans Affairs, including at least
19 2 regional offices in each of the 5 districts of
20 the Veterans Benefits Administration under the
21 organization of such Administration in effect as
22 of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

23 (B) during each of the second and third
24 years during which the Secretary carries out
25 the pilot program, at least once a month in a
26 location within the jurisdiction of each of 15 re-

1 gional offices of the Department, including at
2 least 3 regional offices in each such district.

3 (2) VETERAN ENGAGEMENT TEAM EVENTS.—

4 During each Veteran Engagement Team event, the
5 Secretary shall provide assistance to veterans in
6 completing and adjudicating claims for disability
7 compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United
8 States Code, and for pension under chapter 15 of
9 such title. The Secretary shall ensure that—

10 (A) all Veteran Engagement Team events
11 occur during the normal business hours of the
12 sponsoring regional office;

13 (B) the events are carried out at different
14 locations within the jurisdiction of each regional
15 office and at least 50 miles from any regional
16 office;

17 (C) a sufficient number of physicians (to
18 be available for opinions only), veteran service
19 representatives and rating veteran service rep-
20 resentatives, and other personnel are available
21 at the events to initiate, update, and finalize
22 the completion and adjudication of claims;

23 (D) veterans service organizations have ac-
24 cess to the events for purposes of providing as-
25 sistance to veterans; and

1 (E) a veteran who is unable to complete
2 and adjudicate a claim at an event is informed
3 of what additional information or actions are
4 needed to finalize the claim.

5 (b) LOCATION.—In selecting locations for Veteran
6 Engagement Team events under this section, the Sec-
7 retary shall—

8 (1) coordinate with veteran service organiza-
9 tions and State and local veterans agencies; and

10 (2) seek to select locations that are community-
11 based and easily accessible.

12 (c) TRANSFER OF PERSONNEL.—

13 (1) PHYSICIANS.—The Secretary may not per-
14 manently transfer any physician employed by the
15 Veterans Health Administration for the purpose of
16 staffing a Veteran Engagement Team event.

17 (2) PAYMENT OF SALARIES.—Any amount pay-
18 able to an employee of the Department for work per-
19 formed at a Veteran Engagement Team event is
20 payable only from amounts otherwise available for
21 the payment of the salary of the employee. No addi-
22 tional amounts are authorized to be appropriated
23 under this section for the payment of salaries for
24 Department employee.

1 (d) OTHER AUTHORITIES.—In carrying out the pilot
2 program under this section, the Secretary may—

3 (1) coordinate with States, local governments,
4 nonprofit organizations, and private sector entities
5 to use facilities to host Veteran Engagement Team
6 events for no or minimal costs; and

7 (2) accept, on a without compensation basis,
8 services provided by non-Department physicians in
9 rendering medical opinions relating to claims for
10 compensation and pension.

11 (e) CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS.—In car-
12 rying out the pilot program under this section, the Sec-
13 retary shall collect and analyze information about the cus-
14 tomer satisfaction of veterans who have received assist-
15 ance at an Veteran Engagement Team event.

16 (f) REPORTS.—Not later than April 30, 2017, and
17 annually thereafter beginning on October 1, 2017, for the
18 duration of the program, the Secretary shall submit to
19 Congress a report on the implementation and effectiveness
20 of the events. Such report shall include—

21 (1) the number and types of claims completed
22 and adjudicated at the events;

23 (2) the number and types of claims for which
24 assistance was sought at the events that were not
25 completed or adjudicated at the events and the rea-

1 sons such claims were not completed or adjudicated;
2 and

3 (3) an analysis of the customer satisfaction of
4 veterans who have received assistance at an event
5 based on the information collected under subsection
6 (e).

7 **SEC. 3. MODIFICATION TO LIMITATION ON AWARDS AND**
8 **BONUSES.**

9 Section 705 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Ac-
10 countability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C.
11 703 note) is amended to read as follows:

12 **“SEC. 705. LIMITATION ON AWARDS AND BONUSES PAID TO**
13 **EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
14 **AFFAIRS.**

15 “The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that
16 the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses paid by the
17 Secretary in a fiscal year under chapter 45 or 53 of title
18 5, United States Code, or any other awards or bonuses
19 authorized under such title or title 38, United States
20 Code, does not exceed the following amounts:

21 “(1) With respect to fiscal year 2017,
22 \$250,000,000.

