

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3970

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot grant program to acquire and renovate abandoned homes for homeless veterans.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 5, 2015

Mr. ISRAEL (for himself and Mr. ROONEY of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot grant program to acquire and renovate abandoned homes for homeless veterans.

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 “Housing Our Heroes  
5       Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF PILOT GRANT PROGRAM FOR**  
7       **HOMELESS VETERANS.**

8       (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than one year after  
9       the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of  
10       Veterans Affairs shall commence a pilot grant program

1 to assess the feasibility and advisability of awarding  
2 grants to eligible entities to purchase and renovate aban-  
3 doned homes for homeless veterans.

4 (b) GRANTS.—

5 (1) AWARD.—In carrying out the pilot program  
6 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall award  
7 grants to eligible entities to purchase and renovate  
8 abandoned homes for homeless veterans.

9 (2) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a sin-  
10 gle grant awarded under paragraph (1) shall not ex-  
11 ceed \$1,000,000.

12 (3) NUMBER.—The Secretary may award to an  
13 eligible entity more than one grant under paragraph  
14 (1).

15 (c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may award  
16 a grant under subsection (b)(1) to any of the following:

17 (1) A veterans service agency.

18 (2) A veterans service organization.

19 (3) Homeless organizations.

20 (4) Any other nongovernmental organization.

21 (d) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—

22 (1) APPLICATION.—Any eligible entity seeking  
23 a grant under subsection (b)(1) shall submit to the  
24 Secretary an application therefore in such form and

1 in such manner as the Secretary considers appro-  
2 priate.

3 (2) SELECTION PRIORITY.—

4 (A) COMMUNITIES WITH GREATEST  
5 NEED.—Subject to subparagraph (B), in ac-  
6 cordance with regulations the Secretary shall  
7 prescribe, the Secretary shall give priority in  
8 the awarding of grants under subsection (b)(1)  
9 to eligible entities who serve communities that  
10 the Secretary determines have the greatest need  
11 of homeless services.

12 (B) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—The  
13 Secretary may give priority in the awarding of  
14 grants under subsection (b)(1) to achieve a fair  
15 distribution, as determined by the Secretary,  
16 among homeless veterans in different geo-  
17 graphical regions.

18 (C) OTHER AGREEMENTS.—In awarding a  
19 grant under subsection (b)(1) to an eligible en-  
20 tity in a location determined pursuant to sub-  
21 paragraphs (A) and (B), the Secretary shall  
22 give preference to eligible entities that are en-  
23 tered into an agreement with the Secretary  
24 under section 2041 of title 38, United States  
25 Code.

1 (e) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—

2 (1) PURPOSES.—A grantee may use amounts of  
3 a grant awarded to the grantee under subsection  
4 (b)(1) to purchase or renovate abandoned homes, in-  
5 cluding homes that have been foreclosed.

6 (2) MAXIMUM PURCHASE AMOUNT.—Not more  
7 than \$300,000 of the amount of a grant awarded  
8 under subsection (b)(1) may be used for the pur-  
9 chase of a single home.

10 (3) PAYMENT PROGRAM.—

11 (A) The United States shall not have any  
12 ownership interest in a home that is purchased  
13 by a grantee using amounts of a grant awarded  
14 under subsection (b)(1).

15 (B) Each grantee shall ensure that, begin-  
16 ning one year after the date on which a veteran  
17 begins to reside in a home purchased or ren-  
18 ovated by the grantee using a grant awarded  
19 under subsection (b)(1), the veteran makes  
20 monthly payments to the grantee in an amount  
21 determined appropriate by the grantee that is  
22 not less than 85 percent of the fair market rent  
23 for such home.

24 (C) Each grantee shall determine whether  
25 payments made by a veteran under subpara-

graph (B) shall be treated as rent or as a mortgage for the home for which the veteran is making such payments. The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, shall determine the requirements for such payments.

(D) Each grantee shall pay to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs not less than 80 percent of each payment received under subparagraph (B).

(E) The Secretary may conduct an audit of any grantee to ensure that the grantee carries out this paragraph.

(4) VETERANS HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUND.—

(A) There is established in the Treasury a fund to be known as the “Veterans Homelessness Grant Fund” (in this paragraph referred to as the “Fund”).

(B) The Secretary shall deposit into the Fund the payments collected by the Secretary under paragraph (3)(D).

(C) Amounts deposited into the Fund pursuant to subparagraph (B) shall be available to the Secretary to carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) without further appropria-

1           tion. The Secretary may not use such amounts  
2           from the Fund for any other purpose unless  
3           pursuant to a specific provision of law.

4           (f) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the  
5 pilot program under subsection (a) during the three-year  
6 period beginning on the date of the commencement of the  
7 pilot program.

8           (g) ANNUAL REPORTS.—During each year in which  
9 the Secretary carries out the pilot program under sub-  
10 section (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a re-  
11 port that details, with respect to the year covered by the  
12 report, the number of grants awarded, the amounts so  
13 awarded, the progress of home purchase and renovation  
14 made by eligible entities using such grants, and the num-  
15 ber of tenants currently paying rent towards such homes.

16           (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
17 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary a total of  
18 \$25,000,000 to carry out the pilot program under sub-  
19 section (a).

20           (i) HOMELESS VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section,  
21 the term “homeless veteran” means any of the following  
22 veterans:

23           (1) A veteran who is eligible to receive housing,  
24           clinical services, and case management assistance

1 under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing  
2 Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)).

3 (2) A veteran who is receiving—

4 (A) assistance from, or is the beneficiary  
5 of a service furnished by, a program that is in  
6 receipt of a grant under section 2011 of title  
7 38, United States Code; or

8 (B) services for which per diem payment is  
9 received under section 2012 of such title.

10 (3) A veteran who is—

11 (A) a beneficiary of the outreach program  
12 carried out under section 2022(e) of such title;  
13 or

14 (B) in receipt of referral or counseling  
15 services from the program carried out under  
16 section 2023 of such title.

17 (4) A veteran who is receiving a service or as-  
18 sistance under section 2031 of such title.

19 (5) A veteran who is residing in therapeutic  
20 housing operated under section 2032 of such title.

21 (6) A veteran who is receiving domiciliary serv-  
22 ices under section 2043 of such title or domiciliary  
23 care under section 1710(b) of such title.

- 1           (7) A veteran who is receiving supportive serv-  
2       ices under 2044 of such title.

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