

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 223

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program on awarding grants for provision of furniture, household items, and other assistance to homeless veterans to facilitate their transition into permanent housing, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 21, 2015

Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program on awarding grants for provision of furniture, household items, and other assistance to homeless veterans to facilitate their transition into permanent housing, 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. PILOT PROGRAM ON PROVISION OF FUR-**
4 **NITURE, HOUSEHOLD ITEMS, AND OTHER AS-**
5 **SISTANCE TO HOMELESS VETERANS MOVING**
6 **INTO PERMANENT HOUSING.**

7 (a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
3 retary of Veterans Affairs shall commence a pilot
4 program to assess the feasibility and advisability of
5 awarding grants to eligible entities to provide fur-
6 niture, household items, and other assistance to cov-
7 ered veterans moving into permanent housing to fa-
8 cilitate the settlement of such covered veterans in
9 such housing.

10 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—For purposes of the
11 pilot program, an eligible entity is any of the fol-
12 lowing:

13 (A) A veterans service agency.

14 (B) A veterans service organization.

15 (C) A nongovernmental organization

16 that—

17 (i) is described in paragraph (3), (4),
18 or (19) of section 501(c) of the Internal
19 Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from
20 taxation under section 501(a) of such code;
21 and

22 (ii) has an established history of pro-
23 viding assistance to veterans or the home-
24 less.

1 (3) COVERED VETERANS.—For purposes of the
2 pilot program, a covered veteran is any of the fol-
3 lowing:

4 (A) A formerly homeless veteran who is re-
5 ceiving housing, clinical services, and case man-
6 agement assistance under section 8(o)(19) of
7 the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42
8 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)).

9 (B) A veteran who is receiving—

10 (i) assistance from, or is the bene-
11 ficiary of a service furnished by, a program
12 that is in receipt of a grant under section
13 2011 of title 38, United States Code; or

14 (ii) services for which per diem pay-
15 ment is received under section 2012 of
16 such title.

17 (C) A veteran who is—

18 (i) a beneficiary of the outreach pro-
19 gram carried out under section 2022(e) of
20 such title; or

21 (ii) in receipt of referral or counseling
22 services from the program carried out
23 under section 2023 of such title.

24 (D) A veteran who is receiving a service or
25 assistance under section 2031 of such title.

1 (E) A veteran who is residing in thera-
2 peutic housing operated under section 2032 of
3 such title.

4 (F) A veteran who is receiving domiciliary
5 services under section 2043 of such title or
6 domiciliary care under section 1710(b) of such
7 title.

8 (G) A veteran who is receiving supportive
9 services under section 2044 of such title.

10 (4) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out
11 the pilot program during the three-year period be-
12 ginning on the date of the commencement of the
13 pilot program.

14 (b) GRANTS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
16 out the pilot program through the award of grants
17 to eligible entities for the provision of furniture and
18 other household items as described in subsection
19 (a)(1).

20 (2) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a
21 grant awarded under the pilot program shall not ex-
22 ceed \$500,000.

23 (c) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—

24 (1) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity seeking a
25 grant under the pilot program shall submit to the

1 Secretary an application therefor in such form and
2 in such manner as the Secretary considers appro-
3 priate.

4 (2) SELECTION PRIORITY.—

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

13 (B) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—The
14 Secretary may give priority in the awarding of
15 grants under the pilot program to achieve a fair
16 distribution, as determined by the Secretary,
17 among eligible entities serving covered veterans
18 in different geographic regions, including in
19 rural communities and tribal lands.

20 (d) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
22 graph (2), each eligible entity receiving a grant
23 under the pilot program shall use the grant—

24 (A) to coordinate with the Secretary to fa-
25 cilitate distribution of furniture and other

1 household items to covered veterans moving into
2 permanent housing;

3 (B) to purchase, or otherwise obtain via
4 donation, furniture and household items for use
5 by such covered veterans;

6 (C) to distribute such furniture and house-
7 hold items to such covered veterans; and

8 (D) to pay for background checks, provide
9 security deposits, provide funds for utilities,
10 and provide moving expenses for such covered
11 veterans that are necessary for the settlement
12 of such covered veterans in such housing.

13 (2) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—A re-
14 cipient of a grant awarded under the pilot program
15 may not expend more than \$2,500 of the amount of
16 the grant awarded for the provision to a single cov-
17 ered veteran of assistance under the pilot program.

18 (3) MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING.—In
19 the case of an eligible entity receiving a grant under
20 the pilot program that entered into a memorandum
21 of understanding with the Secretary before the date
22 of the enactment of this Act that provides for the
23 provision of furniture and other household items to
24 covered veterans as described in subsection (a) with-
25 out Federal compensation, the eligible entity may

1 use the grant in accordance with the provisions of
2 such memorandum of understanding in lieu of para-
3 graph (1).

4 (4) FULL USE OF FUNDS.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—A recipient of a grant
6 awarded under the pilot program shall use the
7 full amount of the grant by not later than one
8 year after the date on which the Secretary
9 awards such grant.

10 (B) RECOVERY.—The Secretary may re-
11 cover from a recipient of a grant awarded under
12 this section all of the unused amounts of the
13 grant if all of the amounts of the grant are not
14 used—

15 (i) pursuant to paragraph (1) and
16 subparagraph (A) of this paragraph; or

17 (ii) in a case described in paragraph
18 (3), pursuant to an applicable memo-
19 randum of understanding.

20 (e) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall conduct out-
21 reach, including under chapter 63 of title 38, United
22 States Code, to inform covered veterans about their eligi-
23 bility to receive household items, furniture, and other as-
24 sistance under the pilot program.

1 (f) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe
2 regulations for—

3 (1) evaluating an application by an eligible enti-
4 ty for a grant under the pilot program; and

5 (2) otherwise administering the pilot program.

6 (g) REPORT.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the date that
8 is 90 days after the last day of the pilot program,
9 the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on
10 the pilot program.

11 (2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under
12 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

13 (A) An assessment of the pilot program.

14 (B) The findings of the Secretary with re-
15 spect to the feasibility and advisability of
16 awarding grants to eligible entities as described
17 in subsection (a)(1).

18 (C) Such recommendations as the Sec-
19 retary may have for legislative or administrative
20 action to facilitate the settlement of covered
21 veterans into permanent housing.

22 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
24 out this section \$5,000,000 for each year of the pilot pro-
25 gram.

1 (i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) OUTREACH.—The term “outreach” has the
3 meaning given such term in section 6301(b)(1) of
4 title 38, United States Code.

5 (2) VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY.—The term
6 “veterans service agency” means a unit of a State
7 government, or a political subdivision thereof, that
8 has primary responsibility for programs and activi-
9 ties of such government or subdivision related to vet-
10 erans benefits.

11 (3) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The
12 term “veterans service organization” means any or-
13 ganization recognized by the Secretary for the rep-
14 resentation of veterans under section 5902 of title
15 38, United States Code.

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