

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3169

To improve the hiring, training, and efficiency of acquisition personnel and organizations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 10, 2017

Mr. POLIQUIN (for himself, Mr. BERGMAN, and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Appropriations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To improve the hiring, training, and efficiency of acquisition personnel and organizations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 "VA Acquisition Work-
5 force Improvement and Streamlining Act".

1 **SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENT TO HIRING AND TRAINING OF AC-**
2 **QUISITION PERSONNEL OF DEPARTMENT OF**
3 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS.—

5 (1) PROGRAMS.—Not later than September 30
6 of the fiscal year following the fiscal year during
7 which this Act is enacted, the Secretary shall imple-
8 ment covered training curricula and covered certifi-
9 cation programs.

10 (2) CONSIDERATION OF RELEVANT PROGRAMS
11 OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—In designing and
12 implementing covered training curricula and covered
13 certification programs under paragraph (1), the Sec-
14 retary shall use as models existing training curricula
15 and certification programs that have been estab-
16 lished under chapter 87 of title 10, United States
17 Code, as determined relevant by the Secretary.

18 (3) METHOD OF TRAINING.—The Secretary
19 may develop the training curricula under paragraph
20 (1) in a manner that provides such training in any
21 combination of—

22 (A) training provided in person;

23 (B) training provided over an internet
24 website; or

25 (C) training provided by another depart-
26 ment or agency of the Federal Government.

1 (4) LEVELS OF CERTIFICATIONS.—The Sec-
2 retary may develop the certification programs under
3 paragraph (1) in a manner that uses—

4 (A) one level of certification; or

5 (B) more than one level of certification, as
6 determined appropriate by the Secretary with
7 respect to the level of certification for different
8 grades of the General Schedule.

9 (5) INITIAL GOAL.—Not later than September
10 30 of the second fiscal year following the fiscal year
11 during which this Act is enacted, the Secretary shall
12 ensure that the majority of employees subject to the
13 covered certification programs achieve the certifi-
14 cation or the appropriate level of certification pursu-
15 ant to paragraph (4)(B), as the case may be.

16 (6) SUBSEQUENT GOAL.—After carrying out
17 paragraph (5), the Secretary shall ensure that each
18 employee subject to the covered certification pro-
19 grams achieves the certification or the appropriate
20 level of certification pursuant to paragraph (4)(B),
21 as the case may be, as quickly as practicable.

22 (b) IMPROVEMENTS TO HIRING OF ENTRY-LEVEL
23 POSITIONS.—

24 (1) PRIORITY.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
25 fairs shall prioritize the use of acquisition internship

1 programs to hire employees to entry-level positions
2 relating to acquisition in the Department of Vet-
3 erans Affairs.

4 (2) GOAL.—Not later than September 30 of the
5 fiscal year following the fiscal year during which this
6 Act is enacted, the Secretary shall ensure that the
7 annual number of participants in acquisition intern-
8 ship programs is—

9 (A) not fewer than twice the number of
10 participants in such programs during fiscal year
11 2017; and

12 (B) not more than four times the number
13 of participants in such program during such fis-
14 cal year.

15 (3) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out
16 paragraph (2) until the date on which the Secretary
17 certifies to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of
18 the House of Representatives and the Senate that
19 the projected number of graduates of acquisition in-
20 ternship programs is sufficient to satisfy the human
21 capital needs of the Department with respect to ac-
22 quisition, taking into account the rate of attrition
23 and projected retirements of personnel.

24 (c) TRANSFERS.—

1 (1) AUTHORITY.—In addition to any other
2 transfer authority of the Secretary, the Secretary
3 may transfer or reprogram amounts identified under
4 section 3 as cost savings in order to make such
5 amounts available for—

6 (A) the salaries and travel expenses of par-
7 ticipants in acquisition internship programs;

8 (B) covered training programs; or

9 (C) the design and implementation of cov-
10 ered certification programs.

11 (2) AUTHORIZATIONS.—A transfer made from
12 one account to another under the authority of para-
13 graph (1) shall be deemed to increase the amount
14 authorized for the account to which the amount is
15 transferred by an amount equal to the amount
16 transferred.

17 **SEC. 3. IMPROVEMENT TO EFFICIENCY OF ACQUISITION**
18 **ORGANIZATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF**
19 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

20 (a) PLAN.—The Secretary shall develop a plan to re-
21 duce duplication and to increase efficiencies with respect
22 to the acquisition functions of the Department of Veterans
23 Affairs, with an emphasis on procurement and logistics
24 functions, in a manner that achieves cost savings in an

1 amount necessary to carry out section 2. The Secretary
2 shall ensure that such plan—

3 (1) in all respects and to the greatest extent
4 practicable, seeks to place procurement employees
5 and logistics employees in close geographic proximity
6 to the other employees of the Department for whom
7 the procurement employees and logistics employees
8 procure supplies or services;

9 (2) does not place any procurement employee in
10 a formal reporting or subordinate-supervisor rela-
11 tionship with an employee of the Department for
12 whom the procurement employee procures supplies
13 or services; and

14 (3) may not achieve cost savings through demo-
15 tions, furloughs, or liquidations, as defined in part
16 351 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

17 (b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—In developing the plan
18 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall determine wheth-
19 er to carry out the following activities:

20 (1) Consolidate or abolish (and transfer func-
21 tions to the procurement or logistics activities of in-
22 dividual facilities of the Veterans Health Adminis-
23 tration, the Network Contracting Offices of the Vet-
24 erans Health Administration, the Procurement and
25 Logistics Office of the Veterans Health Administra-

1 tion, or the Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and
2 Construction of the Department)—

- 3 (A) the Service Area Office East;
- 4 (B) the Service Area Office Central;
- 5 (C) the Service Area Office West; and
- 6 (D) the Program Contacting Activity Cen-
7 tral Office.

8 (2) With respect to the functions of the Pro-
9 curement and Logistics Office of the Veterans
10 Health Administration and the Office of Acquisition,
11 Logistics, and Construction of the Department, con-
12 solidate one or more of the following functions into
13 one of the respective offices:

- 14 (A) Policy making functions.
- 15 (B) Contract quality assurance and review
16 functions.
- 17 (C) Real property management functions.
- 18 (D) Business operations functions.
- 19 (E) Health care acquisition.
- 20 (F) Logistics functions.

21 (c) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 180 days after the
22 fiscal year during which this Act is enacted, the Secretary
23 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of
24 the House of Representatives and the Senate the plan de-
25 veloped under subsection (a).

1 (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall com-
2 mence implementation of the plan developed under sub-
3 section (a) beginning on the date that is 30 days after
4 submitting the plan under subsection (c).

5 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

6 In this Act:

7 (1) The term “acquisition internship programs”
8 means programs administered by the Secretary of
9 Veterans Affairs, including the Warriors to Work-
10 force Program and the Acquisition Intern Program,
11 under which the Secretary employs—

12 (A) a veteran, while the veteran earns an
13 undergraduate degree and completes founda-
14 tional training courses relating to acquisition;
15 or

16 (B) an individual who completes progres-
17 sive training courses relating to acquisition and
18 participates in rotational work assignments re-
19 lating to acquisition.

20 (2) The term “covered certification programs”
21 means—

22 (A) with respect to logistics employees, a
23 program to certify knowledge and skills relating
24 to logistics; and

1 (B) with respect to employees of the De-
2 partment who are members of occupational se-
3 ries relating to construction or facilities man-
4 agement, or who award or administer contracts
5 for major construction, minor construction, or
6 non-recurring maintenance, including as con-
7 tract specialists or contracting officers' rep-
8 resentatives, a program to certify knowledge
9 and skills relating to construction or facilities
10 management.

11 (3) The term “covered training curricula”
12 means—

13 (A) with respect to logistics employees, a
14 training curriculum relating to logistics; and

15 (B) with respect to employees specified in
16 paragraph (2)(B), a training curriculum relat-
17 ing to construction or facilities management.

18 (4) The term “logistics” includes supply chain
19 management.

20 (5) The term “logistics employee” means an
21 employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who
22 is a member of an occupational series relating to lo-
23 gistics, or who performs logistics functions within
24 the Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construc-

1 tion of the Department or the Veterans Health Ad-
2 ministration.

3 (6) The term “procurement employee” means
4 an employee of the Department who is a member of
5 an occupational series relating to procurement.

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