

115TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4635

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 14, 2018

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

AN ACT

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors providing counseling for women veterans, 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. PEER SUPPORT COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR**
2 **WOMEN VETERANS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1720F(j) of title 38,
4 United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
5 following new paragraph:

6 “(4)(A) As part of the counseling program under this
7 subsection, the Secretary shall emphasize appointing peer
8 support counselors for women veterans. To the degree
9 practicable, the Secretary shall seek to recruit women peer
10 support counselors with expertise in—

11 “(i) female gender-specific issues and services;

12 “(ii) the provision of information about services
13 and benefits provided under laws administered by
14 the Secretary; or

15 “(iii) employment mentoring.

16 “(B) To the degree practicable, the Secretary shall
17 emphasize facilitating peer support counseling for women
18 veterans who are eligible for counseling and services under
19 section 1720D of this title, have post-traumatic stress dis-
20 order or suffer from another mental health condition, are
21 homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, or are otherwise
22 at increased risk of suicide, as determined by the Sec-
23 retary.

24 “(C) The Secretary shall conduct outreach to inform
25 women veterans about the program and the assistance
26 available under this paragraph.

1 “(D) In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary
2 shall coordinate with such community organizations, State
3 and local governments, institutions of higher education,
4 chambers of commerce, local business organizations, orga-
5 nizations that provide legal assistance, and other organiza-
6 tions as the Secretary considers appropriate.

7 “(E) In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary
8 shall provide adequate training for peer support coun-
9 selors, including training carried out under the national
10 program of training required by section 304(c) of the
11 Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of
12 2010 (38 U.S.C. 1712A note).”.

13 (b) FUNDING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
14 shall carry out paragraph (4) of section 1720F(j) of title
15 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), using
16 funds otherwise made available to the Secretary. No addi-
17 tional funds are authorized to be appropriated by reason
18 of such paragraph.

19 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years
20 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
21 of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on
22 Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representa-
23 tives a report on the peer support counseling program
24 under section 1720F(j) of title 38, United States Code,
25 as amended by this section. Such report shall include—

1 (1) the number of peer support counselors in
2 the program;

3 (2) an assessment of the effectiveness of the
4 program; and

5 (3) a description of the oversight of the pro-
6 gram.

Passed the House of Representatives June 13, 2018.

Attest:

KAREN L. HAAS,

Clerk.