

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1439

To require the Secretary of Defense to include gambling disorder in health assessments for members of the Armed Forces and related research efforts of the Department of Defense.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 26, 2017

Ms. WARREN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Defense to include gambling disorder in health assessments for members of the Armed Forces and related research efforts of the Department of Defense.

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 “Preventing and Treat-
5 ing Gambling Disorder in the Military Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Gambling disorder is a public health con-
2 cern characterized by increasing preoccupation with
3 gambling, loss of control, restlessness, or irritability
4 when attempting to stop gambling, and continuation
5 of the gambling behavior in spite of mounting seri-
6 ous, negative consequences.

7 (2) Gambling disorder is an addiction similar to
8 substance-use disorders, such as those associated
9 with alcohol and drugs.

10 (3) Gambling disorder is associated with a high-
11 er risk of suicide attempts, substance-use disorders,
12 and other mental-health conditions, in addition to
13 being associated with financial and legal problems.

14 (4) According to the National Council on Prob-
15 lem Gambling, it is estimated that as many as
16 56,000 active duty members of the Armed Forces
17 meet criteria for gambling disorder.

18 (5) However, according to the Department of
19 Defense, only about 120 military personnel were di-
20 agnosed with gambling disorder or were seen for
21 problem gambling each year between fiscal year
22 2011 and fiscal year 2015.

23 (6) Less than 10 percent of people with gam-
24 bling problems seek help due to shame, stigma, and

1 misunderstanding of the nature of gambling dis-
2 order.

3 (7) In addition to factors specified in paragraph
4 (6), military personnel might not seek help for gam-
5 bling problems due to lack of services specific to
6 problem gambling and fear of jeopardizing their ca-
7 reer or security clearance.

8 (8) According to a 2017 report by the Govern-
9 ment Accountability Office—

10 (A) the Department of Defense operates
11 more than 3,100 slot machines at military in-
12 stallations overseas that are available to mem-
13 bers of the Armed Forces and their families;

14 (B) those slot machines generate approxi-
15 mately \$100,000,000 in revenue for the Depart-
16 ment, which is used for further recreational ac-
17 tivities for members of the Armed Forces;

18 (C) the Department and the Coast Guard
19 do not systematically screen for gambling dis-
20 order; and

21 (D) the Department and the Coast Guard
22 do not address gambling disorder in a similar
23 manner to other addictive disorders, such as al-
24 cohol-related disorders.

1 **SEC. 3. INCLUSION OF GAMBLING DISORDER IN HEALTH**
2 **ASSESSMENTS AND RELATED RESEARCH EF-**
3 **FORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.**

4 (a) **ANNUAL PERIODIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT.**—The
5 Secretary of Defense shall incorporate medical screening
6 questions specific to gambling disorder into the Annual
7 Periodic Health Assessment (DD Form 3024) conducted
8 by the Department of Defense for members of the Armed
9 Forces.

10 (b) **RESEARCH EFFORTS.**—The Secretary shall incor-
11 porate into ongoing research efforts of the Department
12 questions on gambling disorder, as appropriate, including
13 by restoring such questions into the Health Related Be-
14 haviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel.

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