

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1951

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to award grants to nonprofit veterans service organizations to upgrade the community facilities of such organizations.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 5, 2017

Mr. COONS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to award grants to nonprofit veterans service organizations to upgrade the community facilities of such organizations.

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 “Veteran Wellness Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM ON TRANSFORMATION OF VET-**  
2 **ERANS SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS FACILI-**  
3 **TIES INTO VETERAN HEALTH AND WELLNESS**  
4 **CENTERS.**

5 (a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans  
7 Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which  
8 the Secretary makes grants to nonprofit veterans  
9 services organizations recognized by the Secretary  
10 for the representation of veterans under section  
11 5902 of title 38, United States Code (in this section  
12 referred to as “VSOs”), to upgrade, through con-  
13 struction and repair, community facilities of VSOs  
14 into health and wellness centers and to promote and  
15 expand complementary and integrative wellness pro-  
16 grams.

17 (2) USE OF AMOUNTS.—The recipient of a  
18 grant under this section shall use the grant  
19 amounts—

20 (A) to carry out the repair of a facility  
21 owned by the recipient or to construct a facility  
22 on property owned by the recipient; or

23 (B) to provide complementary and integra-  
24 tive medicine or wellness programs, and to pay  
25 the costs of childcare during such programs, to  
26 veterans and family members, as such term is

1 defined in section 1712A(h)(3) of title 38,  
2 United States Code.

3 (3) LIMITATION ON USE OF AMOUNTS.—The re-  
4 cipient of a grant under this section may not use the  
5 grant amounts to purchase real estate or to carry  
6 out repair of facilities leased by the recipient or to  
7 construct facilities on property leased by the recipi-  
8 ent.

9 (4) FACILITY OPERATION.—As a condition of  
10 the receipt of a grant under this section, a VSO  
11 shall agree to carry out the operation and mainte-  
12 nance of the facility that is repaired or constructed  
13 using grant amounts for the three-year period begin-  
14 ning on the date of the completion of the repair or  
15 construction.

16 (b) DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot pro-  
17 gram shall be carried out during the two-year period be-  
18 ginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot pro-  
19 gram.

20 (c) LOCATIONS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—In selecting the recipients of  
22 grants under this section, the Secretary shall ensure  
23 that the grant recipients use grant amounts to con-  
24 struct or repair facilities located in not fewer than  
25 ten different geographic locations.

1           (2) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give pri-  
2           ority in the selection of locations under paragraph  
3           (1) to locations in economically depressed areas that  
4           are not in close proximity to medical centers of the  
5           Department of Veterans Affairs.

6           (d) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant  
7           under this section, a VSO shall submit to the Secretary  
8           an application in such form and in such manner as the  
9           Secretary may require.

10          (e) REPORTS.—

11           (1) PERIODIC REPORTS.—

12           (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180  
13           days after the date of the enactment of this  
14           Act, and every 180 days thereafter for the du-  
15           ration of the pilot program, the Secretary shall  
16           submit to Congress a report on the pilot pro-  
17           gram.

18           (B) REPORT ELEMENTS.—Each report re-  
19           quired by subparagraph (A) shall include the  
20           following:

21           (i) The findings and conclusions of  
22           the Secretary with respect to the pilot pro-  
23           gram during the 180-day period covered by  
24           the report.

1                   (ii) An assessment of the benefits of  
2                   the pilot program to veterans and family  
3                   members of veterans during the 180-day  
4                   period covered by the report.

5                   (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days  
6                   after the conclusion of the pilot program, the Sec-  
7                   retary shall submit to Congress a report detailing  
8                   the recommendations of the Secretary as to the ad-  
9                   visability of continuing or expanding the pilot pro-  
10                  gram.

11                  (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
12                  authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary such sums  
13                  as may be necessary to carry out this section.

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