

VETERAN PARTNERS' EFFORTS TO ENHANCE REINTEGRATION ACT

On Thursday, January 25, 2018, the Senate passed S. 1873, as amended, as follows:

S. 1873

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veteran Partners' Efforts to Enhance Reintegration Act" or the "Veteran PEER Act".

SEC. 2. PROGRAM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF PEER SPECIALISTS IN PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM SETTINGS WITHIN MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program to establish not fewer than two peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs to promote the use and integration of services for mental health, substance use disorder, and behavior health in a primary care setting.

(b) TIMEFRAME FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out the program at medical centers of the Department as follows:

(1) Not later than December 31, 2018, at not fewer than 25 medical centers of the Department.

(2) Not later than December 31, 2019, at not fewer than 50 medical centers of the Department.

(c) SELECTION OF LOCATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall select medical centers for the program as follows:

(A) Not fewer than five shall be medical centers of the Department that are designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.

(B) Not fewer than ten shall be medical centers of the Department that are not designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting medical centers for the program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the feasibility and advisability of selecting medical centers in the following areas:

(A) Rural areas and other areas that are underserved by the Department.

(B) Areas that are not in close proximity to an active duty military installation.

(C) Areas representing different geographic locations, such as census tracts established by the Bureau of the Census.

(d) GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES.—In carrying out the program at each location selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(1) the needs of female veterans are specifically considered and addressed; and

(2) female peer specialists are made available to female veterans who are treated at each location.

(e) ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY PROVIDERS.—At each location selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall consider ways in which peer specialists can conduct outreach to health care providers in the community who are known to be serving veterans to engage with those providers and veterans served by those providers.

(f) REPORTS.—

(1) PERIODIC REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than once every 180 days thereafter until the Secretary determines that the program is being carried out at the last location to be selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the program.

(B) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by subparagraph (A) shall, with respect to the 180-day period preceding the submittal of the report, include the following:

(i) The findings and conclusions of the Secretary with respect to the program.

(ii) An assessment of the benefits of the program to veterans and family members of veterans.

(iii) An assessment of the effectiveness of peer specialists in engaging under subsection (e) with health care providers in the community and veterans served by those providers.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the Secretary determines that the program is being carried out at the last location to be selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report detailing the recommendations of the Secretary as to the feasibility and advisability of expanding the program to additional locations.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 101, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 101) providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 101) was agreed to.

AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF ESCORT COMMITTEE

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Presiding Officer of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House of Representatives to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber for the joint session to be held at 9 p.m. on Tuesday, January 30, 2018.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—READING OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the resolution of the Senate of January 24, 1901, the traditional reading of Washington's Farewell Address take place on Monday, February 26, following the prayer and pledge; further, that Senator PETERS be recognized to deliver the address.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Stras nomination at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, January 30; and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2018

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, January 30; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Stras nomination; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m., and that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Stras nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator CASEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, tonight I rise to speak about two matters. The first is the issue of community health centers, which, of course, is a major issue for States across the country.