

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2435

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an interagency task force on the use of public lands to provide medical treatment and therapy to veterans through outdoor recreation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 1, 2019

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself and Mr. SMITH of Washington) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an interagency task force on the use of public lands to provide medical treatment and therapy to veterans through outdoor recreation.

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 “Accelerating Veterans
5 Recovery Outdoors Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON OUTDOOR RECRE-**
2 **ATION FOR VETERANS.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after
4 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
5 Veterans Affairs shall establish a task force to be known
6 as the “Task Force on Outdoor Recreation for Veterans”
7 (in this section referred to as the “Task Force”).

8 (b) COMPOSITION.—The Task Force shall be com-
9 posed of the following members or their designees:

10 (1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

11 (2) The Secretary of the Interior.

12 (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
13 ices.

14 (4) The Secretary of Agriculture.

15 (5) The Secretary of Defense.

16 (6) The Secretary of Homeland Security.

17 (7) The Chief of the Army Corps of Engineers.

18 (8) Any other member that the Secretary of
19 Veterans Affairs determines to be appropriate.

20 (c) CHAIRPERSONS.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
21 fairs and the Secretary of the Interior shall serve as co-
22 chairpersons of the Task Force (in this section referred
23 to as the “Chairpersons”).

24 (d) DUTIES.—

25 (1) TASK FORCE.—The duties of the Task
26 Force shall be—

1 (A) to identify opportunities to formalize
2 coordination between the Department of Vet-
3 erans Affairs, public land agencies, and partner
4 organizations regarding the use of public lands
5 or other outdoor spaces for medical treatment
6 and recreational therapy for veterans;

7 (B) to identify barriers that exist to pro-
8 viding veterans with opportunities for medical
9 treatment and therapy through the use of out-
10 door recreation on public lands or other outdoor
11 spaces; and

12 (C) to develop recommendations to better
13 facilitate the use of public lands or other out-
14 door spaces for preventative care, medical treat-
15 ment, and therapy for veterans.

16 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Task Force shall
17 carry out the duties under paragraph (1) in con-
18 sultation with appropriate veterans outdoor recre-
19 ation groups.

20 (e) REPORTS.—

21 (1) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—Not later than
22 180 days after the date on which the Task Force is
23 established, the Chairpersons shall submit to Con-
24 gress a report on the preliminary findings of the
25 Task Force.

1 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than one year
2 after the date of the submittal of the preliminary re-
3 port under paragraph (1), the Chairpersons shall
4 submit to Congress a report on the findings of the
5 Task Force, which shall include the recommenda-
6 tions developed under subsection (d)(1)(C).

7 (f) DURATION.—The Task Force shall terminate on
8 the date that is one year after the date of the submittal
9 of the final report in subsection (e)(2).

10 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) The term “public lands” means any rec-
12 reational lands under the jurisdiction of the Federal
13 Government or a State or local government.

14 (2) The term “veteran” has the meaning given
15 that term in section 101 of title 38, United States
16 Code.

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