

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4554

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish and implement a comprehensive anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2019

Ms. BROWNLEY of California introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish and implement a comprehensive anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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. ANTI-HARASSMENT AND ANTI-SEXUAL ASSAULT**
4 **POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
5 **AFFAIRS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 5 of title
7 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end
8 the following new section:

1 **“§ 533. Anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault pol-**
2 **icy**

3 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans
4 Affairs shall establish a comprehensive policy to end har-
5 assment and sexual assault, including sexual and gender-
6 based harassment, at all facilities of the Department of
7 Veterans Affairs. This policy shall include the following:

8 “(1) Responses to incidents of harassment and
9 sexual assault committed by any veteran or other
10 public visitor within a facility of the Department.

11 “(2) Responses to incidents of harassment and
12 sexual assault of any veteran or other public visitor
13 within a facility of the Department.

14 “(3) A process for reporting and responding to
15 harassment and sexual assault described in para-
16 graph (1).

17 “(4) A process for reporting and responding to
18 harassment and sexual assault described in para-
19 graph (2).

20 “(5) A mandatory reporting requirement appli-
21 cable to any employee or contractor of the Depart-
22 ment who witnesses harassment or sexual assault
23 within a facility of the Department.

24 “(6) Mandatory annual training for employees
25 and contractors of the Department regarding how to

1 report and address harassment and sexual assault
2 described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

3 “(7) Annual distribution of anti-harassment
4 and anti-sexual assault educational materials by mail
5 or email to each individual entitled to a benefit
6 under a law administered by the Secretary.

7 “(8) The prominent display of anti-harassment
8 and anti-sexual assault messages in each facility of
9 the Department, including how to report harassment
10 and sexual assault at such facility.

11 “(9) The posting of anti-harassment and anti-
12 sexual assault banners on websites of the Depart-
13 ment, including eBenefits.va.gov and
14 myHealthEVet.va.gov.

15 “(b) POINTS OF CONTACT.—The Secretary shall des-
16 ignate, as a point of contact to receive reports of harass-
17 ment and sexual assault—

18 “(1) at least one individual at each facility of
19 the Department, with regards to that facility;

20 “(2) at least one individual employed in each
21 Veterans Integrated Service Network (‘VISN’), with
22 regards to facilities in that VISN; and

23 “(3) at least one individual employed at the
24 Central Office of the Department to track reports of

1 harassment across the Department, disaggregated
2 by facility.

3 “(c) REPORTING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
4 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of
5 the Senate and the House of Representatives an annual
6 report on harassment and sexual assault in facilities of
7 the Department. Each such report shall include the fol-
8 lowing:

9 “(1) Results of harassment and sexual assault
10 programming, including the End Harassment pro-
11 gram.

12 “(2) Results of studies from the Women’s
13 Health Practice Based Research Network related to
14 harassment and sexual assault.

15 “(3) Data collected on incidents of sexual har-
16 assment and sexual assault.

17 “(4) A description of any actions taken by the
18 Secretary during the year preceding the date of the
19 report to stop harassment and sexual assault at fa-
20 cilities of the Department.

21 “(5) An assessment of the implementation of
22 the training required in subsection (a)(5).

23 “(6) A list of resources the Secretary deter-
24 mines necessary to prevent harassment and sexual
25 assault at facilities of the Department.”.

1 (b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
2 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding
3 after the item relating to section 532 the following new
4 item:

“533. Anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy.”.

5 (c) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall carry out sec-
6 tion 533 of such title, as added by subsection (a), not later
7 than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

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