

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 699

To establish an interagency committee on the development of green alert systems that would be activated when a veteran goes missing, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 7, 2019

Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Ms. ERNST) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To establish an interagency committee on the development of green alert systems that would be activated when a veteran goes missing, and for other purposes.

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 “National Green Alert
5 Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON**
2 **DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN ALERT SYSTEMS.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the
4 Green Alert System Advisory and Support Committee (re-
5 ferred to in this Act as the “Committee”).

6 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Committee shall be
8 composed of members appointed by the President, of
9 whom—

10 (A) not fewer than one shall be an em-
11 ployee of the Department of Justice with expe-
12 rience in coordinating the AMBER Alert com-
13 munications network, as that term is used in
14 subtitle A of title III of the PROTECT Act (34
15 U.S.C. 20501 et seq.);

16 (B) not fewer than one shall be an em-
17 ployee of the Department of Health and
18 Human Services, of which not fewer than one
19 shall be an employee of the Substance Abuse
20 and Mental Health Services Administration of
21 the Department of Health and Human Services;

22 (C) not fewer than one shall be an em-
23 ployee of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

24 (D) not fewer than one shall be an em-
25 ployee of the Department of Transportation;

1 (E) not fewer than one shall be a veteran
2 (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United
3 States Code) who—

4 (i) is not eligible for appointment to
5 the Committee under subparagraph (A),
6 (B), (C), or (D); and

7 (ii) retired or otherwise honorably sep-
8 arated from the Armed Forces with a mili-
9 tary pay grade of O-7 or higher; and

10 (F) not fewer than one shall be a member
11 of a veterans service organization who can dem-
12 onstrate familiarity with, or experience in, the
13 development of an alert or support system in a
14 State for either missing veterans or veteran
15 mental health.

16 (2) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—The President
17 shall appoint additional members of the Committee
18 from among individuals at the State, local, and trib-
19 al level who are experts in alert systems, such as the
20 AMBER Alert, as that term is used in subtitle A of
21 title III of the PROTECT Act (34 U.S.C. 20501 et
22 seq.).

23 (3) DATE.—The appointments of the members
24 of the Committee shall be made not later than 120
25 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

1 (c) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Committee
3 shall be appointed for the life of the Committee.

4 (2) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Com-
5 mittee—

6 (A) shall not affect the powers of the Com-
7 mittee; and

8 (B) shall be filled in the same manner as
9 the original appointment.

10 (d) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 60 days after
11 the date on which all members of the Committee have been
12 appointed, the Committee shall hold the first meeting of
13 the Committee.

14 (e) MEETINGS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Committee shall meet
16 not less frequently than twice each year.

17 (2) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of
18 the Committee shall constitute a quorum, but a less-
19 er number of members may hold hearings.

20 (f) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The
21 Committee shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chair-
22 person from among the members of the Committee.

23 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

24 (1) STATE.—The term “State” means any
25 State of the United States, the District of Columbia,

1 the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United
2 States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the
3 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,
4 and any possession of the United States.

5 (2) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The
6 term “veterans service organization” means an orga-
7 nization recognized by the Secretary for the rep-
8 resentation of veterans under section 5902 of title
9 38, United States Code.

10 **SEC. 3. DUTIES OF COMMITTEE.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Committee shall develop best
12 practices and provide technical assistance to States to es-
13 tablish State systems, to be known as “green alert” sys-
14 tems, that would be activated when a veteran with a his-
15 tory of mental health issues, including neurocognitive dis-
16 orders, suicide attempts or impulses, or substance use dis-
17 order goes missing.

18 (b) MISSING VETERAN DETERMINATION.—The Com-
19 mittee shall determine the circumstances under which a
20 veteran is considered missing for purposes of this section.

21 (c) COMPLIANCE WITH PRIVACY LAWS.—The Com-
22 mittee shall ensure that the State systems described in
23 subsection (a) comply with applicable Federal and State
24 privacy laws.

1 (d) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
 2 of the enactment of this Act, the Committee shall submit
 3 to the President and Congress a report that contains a
 4 detailed statement of the findings and conclusions of the
 5 Committee, together with the recommendations of the
 6 Committee for such legislative and administrative action
 7 as the Committee considers appropriate.

8 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) STATE.—The term “State” has the mean-
 10 ing given that term in section 2(g).

11 (2) VETERAN.—The term “veteran” means—

12 (A) a veteran as defined in section 101 of
 13 title 38, United States Code; and

14 (B) any former member of the Armed
 15 Forces, including any individual who received a
 16 discharge under conditions other than honor-
 17 able that is determined by the Secretary of De-
 18 fense to have resulted from substance use dis-
 19 order, a mental health issue, or a suicide at-
 20 tempt.

21 **SEC. 4. POWERS OF COMMITTEE.**

22 (a) HEARINGS.—The Committee may hold such hear-
 23 ings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testi-
 24 mony, and receive such evidence as the Committee con-
 25 siders advisable to carry out this Act.

1 (b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Committee may secure
3 directly from any Federal agency such information
4 as the Committee considers necessary to carry out
5 this Act.

6 (2) FURNISHING INFORMATION.—On request of
7 the Chairperson of the Committee, the head of the
8 Federal agency shall furnish the information to the
9 Committee.

10 (c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Committee may use the
11 United States mails in the same manner and under the
12 same conditions as other Federal agencies.

13 (d) GIFTS.—The Committee may accept, use, and
14 dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

15 **SEC. 5. COMMITTEE PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

16 (a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Committee
18 who is not an officer or employee of the Federal
19 Government shall be compensated at a rate equal to
20 the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay
21 prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule
22 under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code,
23 for each day (including travel time) during which the
24 member is engaged in the performance of the duties
25 of the Committee.

1 (2) FEDERAL MEMBERS.—A member of the
2 Committee who is an officer or employee of the
3 United States shall serve without compensation in
4 addition to that received for service as an officer or
5 employee of the United States.

6 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Com-
7 mittee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem
8 in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees
9 of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5,
10 United States Code, while away from their home or reg-
11 ular places of business in the performance of services for
12 the Committee.

13 (c) STAFF.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the
15 Committee may, without regard to the civil service
16 laws (including regulations), appoint and terminate
17 an executive director and such other additional per-
18 sonnel as may be necessary to enable the Committee
19 to perform the duties of the Committee, except that
20 the employment of an executive director shall be
21 subject to confirmation by the Committee.

22 (2) COMPENSATION.—The Chairperson of the
23 Committee may fix the compensation of the execu-
24 tive director and other personnel without regard to
25 chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title

1 5, United States Code, relating to classification of
2 positions and General Schedule pay rates, except
3 that the rate of pay for the executive director and
4 other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for
5 level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316
6 of that title.

7 (d) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Any
8 Federal Government employee may be detailed to the
9 Committee without reimbursement, and such detail shall
10 be without interruption or loss of civil service status or
11 privilege.

12 (e) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-
13 TENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Committee may
14 procure temporary and intermittent services under section
15 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individ-
16 uals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual
17 rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive
18 Schedule under section 5316 of that title.

19 **SEC. 6. TERMINATION OF COMMITTEE.**

20 The Committee shall terminate 180 days after the
21 date on which the Committee submits the report required
22 under section 3(d).

23 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
25 priated to carry out this Act \$500,000.

1 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Any amounts appropriated
2 under the authorization contained in this section shall re-
3 main available, without fiscal year limitation, until ex-
4 pended.

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