

Union Calendar No. 16

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1448

[Report No. 117-31]

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on dog training therapy, and to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide service dogs to veterans with mental illnesses who do not have mobility impairments.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2021

Mr. STIVERS (for himself, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. WALTZ, Ms. SLOTKIN, Mr. DUNN, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. TAYLOR, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. NORMAN, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. ZELDIN, Mrs. AXNE, Mr. HASTINGS, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio, Mr. LIEU, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. MCKINLEY, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. COHEN, Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. PANETTA, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. PALAZZO, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. KEATING, Mr. GAETZ, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. COSTA, Mr. TURNER, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. BACON, Mr. TRONE, Mr. MORELLE, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. LAMB, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. BUCK, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, Mr. PERRY, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HICE of Georgia, Mr. PENCE, Ms. HERRELL, Mrs. BICE of Oklahoma, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LONG, Ms. MACE, Mr. STEWART, Mr. CARL, Mr. NEGUSE, Mr. CAWTHORN, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. BANKS, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. BALDERSON, Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mr. STANTON, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RUSH, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. LAMBORN,

Mr. HAGEDORN, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. POSEY, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. LATTA, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. KUSTOFF, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. ROSE, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. ROY, Mr. UPTON, Mr. KATKO, Mr. EMMER, Mr. WELCH, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. BUDD, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. BRADY, Mr. BURCHETT, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ARMSTRONG, Mr. CROW, Mr. HILL, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. BABIN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. COMER, Mr. ESTES, Mrs. LESKO, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. ROUZER, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. STEIL, Mr. LAMALFA, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. CLOUD, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. REED, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania, Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. MAST, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. BARR, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. GREEN of Tennessee, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. CHABOT, Mrs. MCCLAIN, Mr. GARCIA of California, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. AUCHINCLOSS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MEUSER, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. MOULTON, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. KILMER, Mr. SOTO, Mrs. HINSON, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. GOODEN of Texas, Mr. GOSAR, Ms. CHENEY, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. FUDGE, and Mr. STAUBER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

MAY 12, 2021

Additional sponsors: Ms. CHU, Mr. PHILLIPS, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. GARBARINO, Mr. GUEST, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. NEWMAN, Mr. HARDER of California, Mr. KINZINGER, Ms. SPANBERGER, Mr. DELGADO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. JONES, Mr. CLINE, Ms. TITUS, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. KIND, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. NUNES, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. BOST, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. HERN, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. ALLRED, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. DEAN, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. HIMES, Mr. SCHRADER, Ms. WILD, Ms. CRAIG, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. MOONEY, Mr. BROOKS, Mr. BENTZ, Mr. PALMER, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. COLE, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. JACKSON, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. OWENS, Mr. PFLUGER, Mrs. STEEL, Mr. FEENSTRA, Mrs. KIM of California, Mr. TORRES of New York, Ms. ROSS, Mrs. GREENE of Georgia, Mr. POCAN, Mr. MOORE of Utah, Mr. MELJER, Mr. NEHLS, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. CORREA, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. MANNING, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. MALINOWSKI, Ms. STEVENS, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. OBERNOLTE, Mr.

LATURNER, Mr. ISSA, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. JACOBS of California, Mrs. SPARTZ, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mrs. FISCHBACH, Mr. ROSENDALE, Mr. JORDAN, Mrs. LURIA, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mrs. LEE of Nevada, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. JACOBS of New York, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. MANN, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, and Mr. CASTEN

MAY 12, 2021

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole
House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italie*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on March 1, 2021]

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on dog training therapy, and to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide service dogs to veterans with mental illnesses who do not have mobility impairments.

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 “Puppies Assisting*
5 *Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act” or the*
6 *“PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act”.*

7 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PRO-**
8 **GRAM ON DOG TRAINING THERAPY.**

9 *(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the*
10 *date of the enactment of the Act, the Secretary of Veterans*
11 *Affairs shall commence the conduct of a pilot program to*
12 *provide canine training to eligible veterans diagnosed with*
13 *post-traumatic stress disorder (in this section referred to as*
14 *“PTSD”)* *as an element of a complementary and integra-*
15 *tive health program for such veterans.*

16 *(b) DURATION; MEDICAL CENTERS.—*

17 *(1) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out*
18 *the pilot program under subsection (a) for a five-year*
19 *period beginning on the date of the commencement of*
20 *the pilot program.*

21 *(2) MEDICAL CENTERS.—The Secretary shall en-*
22 *sure that such pilot program is carried out by not*
23 *fewer than five medical centers of the Department of*
24 *Veterans Affairs located in geographically diverse*
25 *areas.*

1 (c) *AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES.*—*In carrying out*
2 *the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall*
3 *seek to enter into agreements with nongovernmental entities*
4 *that the Secretary determines have the demonstrated ability*
5 *to provide the canine training specified in subsection (a).*

6 (d) *REQUIRED CONDITIONS.*—*The Secretary shall in-*
7 *clude in any agreement under subsection (c) conditions re-*
8 *quiring that the nongovernmental entity seeking to enter*
9 *into the agreement—*

10 (1) *submits to the Secretary certification that the*
11 *entity is an accredited service dog training organiza-*
12 *tion;*

13 (2) *agrees to ensure that veterans participating*
14 *in the pilot program under subsection (a) receive*
15 *training from certified service dog training instruc-*
16 *tors for a period of time determined appropriate by*
17 *the entity;*

18 (3) *agrees to ensure that veterans participating*
19 *in such pilot program are prohibited from having ac-*
20 *cess to a dog under such pilot program at any time*
21 *during such participation without the supervision of*
22 *a certified service dog training instructor;*

23 (4) *agrees to ensure that veterans participating*
24 *in such pilot program receive training in skills*

1 *unique to the needs of the veteran to address or allevi-*
2 *ate PTSD symptoms of the veteran;*

3 (5) *agrees not to use shock collars or prong col-*
4 *lars as training tools and to use positive reinforce-*
5 *ment training; and*

6 (6) *agrees to provide any follow-up training sup-*
7 *port specified in subsection (e)(2), as applicable.*

8 *(e) ADOPTION OF DOG.—*

9 (1) *IN GENERAL.—A veteran who has partici-*
10 *ipated in the pilot program under subsection (a) may*
11 *adopt a dog that the veteran assisted in training dur-*
12 *ing such pilot program if the veteran and the vet-*
13 *eran’s health provider (in consultation with the entity*
14 *that provided the canine training with respect to the*
15 *dog under such pilot program) determine that it is in*
16 *the best interest of the veteran.*

17 (2) *FOLLOW-UP TRAINING SUPPORT.—If a vet-*
18 *eran adopts a dog under paragraph (1), the entity*
19 *that provided the canine training with respect to the*
20 *dog under the pilot program shall provide follow-up*
21 *training support for the life of the dog. Such support*
22 *shall include the provision of a contact plan between*
23 *the veteran and the entity that enables the veteran to*
24 *seek and receive assistance from the entity to ensure*
25 *the dog is being properly cared for.*

1 (f) *ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER CARE AND TREAT-*
2 *MENT.—Participation in the pilot program under sub-*
3 *section (a) may not preclude a veteran from receiving any*
4 *other medical care or treatment for PTSD furnished by the*
5 *Department, including therapy, for which the veteran is*
6 *otherwise eligible.*

7 (g) *COLLECTION OF DATA.—In carrying out this sec-*
8 *tion, the Secretary shall—*

9 (1) *develop metrics and other appropriate means*
10 *to measure, with respect to veterans participating in*
11 *the pilot program under subsection (a)—*

12 (A) *the number of such veterans partici-*
13 *pating;*

14 (B) *the satisfaction of such veterans with*
15 *the pilot program;*

16 (C) *whether participation in the pilot pro-*
17 *gram resulted in any clinically relevant im-*
18 *provements for such veterans, as determined by*
19 *the health care provider or clinical team that re-*
20 *ferred the veteran to participate in the pilot pro-*
21 *gram; and*

22 (D) *such other factors as the Secretary may*
23 *determine appropriate; and*

1 (2) *establish processes to document and track the*
2 *progress of such veterans under the pilot program*
3 *with respect to health benefits and improvements.*

4 (h) *REPORT BY SECRETARY.—Not later than one year*
5 *before the date on which the pilot program under subsection*
6 *(a) terminates, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees*
7 *on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and*
8 *the Senate a report containing the recommendations of the*
9 *Secretary regarding—*

10 (1) *whether to extend or make permanent the*
11 *pilot program; and*

12 (2) *the feasibility and advisability of expanding*
13 *the pilot program to address mental health conditions*
14 *other than PTSD.*

15 (i) *GAO BRIEFING AND STUDY.—*

16 (1) *BRIEFING.—Not later than one year after the*
17 *date of the commencement of the pilot program under*
18 *subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United*
19 *States shall provide to the Committees on Veterans'*
20 *Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate*
21 *a briefing on the methodology established for the pilot*
22 *program.*

23 (2) *REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the*
24 *date on which the pilot program terminates, the*
25 *Comptroller General shall submit to the committees*

1 specified in paragraph (1) a report on the pilot pro-
2 gram. Such report shall include an evaluation of the
3 approach and methodology used for the pilot program
4 with respect to—

5 (A) assisting veterans with PTSD; and

6 (B) measuring relevant metrics, such as re-
7 duction in scores under the Clinician Adminis-
8 tered PTSD Scale (CAPS), improvement in psy-
9 chosocial function, and therapeutic compliance.

10 (j) *DEFINITIONS.*—*In this section:*

11 (1) The term “accredited service dog training or-
12 ganization” means an organization described in sec-
13 tion 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
14 that—

15 (A) provides service dogs to veterans with
16 PTSD; and

17 (B) is accredited by an accrediting organi-
18 zation with demonstrated experience, national
19 scope, and recognized leadership and expertise in
20 the training of service dogs and education in the
21 use of service dogs (as determined by the Sec-
22 retary).

23 (2) The term “eligible veteran” means a veteran
24 who—

1 (A) is enrolled in the patient enrollment
2 system in the Department of Veterans Affairs
3 under section 1705 of title 38, United States
4 Code; and

5 (B) has been recommended for participation
6 in the pilot program under subsection (a) by a
7 qualified mental health care provider or clinical
8 team based on medical judgment that the veteran
9 may benefit from such participation with respect
10 to the diagnosed PTSD of the veteran.

11 (3) The term “service dog training instructor”
12 means an instructor who provides the direct training
13 of veterans with PTSD in the art and science of serv-
14 ice dog training and handling.

15 **SEC. 3. PROVISION OF SERVICE DOGS AND VETERINARY IN-**
16 **SURANCE BENEFITS TO VETERANS WITH**
17 **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER WHO DO**
18 **NOT HAVE CERTAIN IMPAIRMENTS.**

19 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 1714 of title 38, United
20 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following
21 new subsections:

22 “(e) The Secretary may provide a service dog to a vet-
23 eran under subsection (c)(3) regardless of whether the vet-
24 eran has a mobility impairment.

1 “(f)(1) *The Secretary shall provide to any veteran de-*
2 *scribed in paragraph (2) a commercially available veteri-*
3 *nary insurance policy for each dog provided to such veteran*
4 *under subsection (b) or (c).*

5 “(2) *A veteran described in this paragraph is a veteran*
6 *who—*

7 “(A) *is diagnosed with post-traumatic stress dis-*
8 *order or a visual, hearing, or substantial mobility im-*
9 *pairment;*

10 “(B) *has received a dog under subsection (b) or*
11 *(c) in connection with such disorder or impairment;*
12 *and*

13 “(C) *meets such other requirements as the Sec-*
14 *retary may prescribe.”.*

15 (b) *APPLICABILITY.—Section 1714(f) of title 38,*
16 *United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply*
17 *with respect to a veteran provided a dog by the Secretary*
18 *of Veterans Affairs regardless of whether the provision oc-*
19 *curs before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this*
20 *Act.*

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