

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4809

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program for the provision of service dogs to eligible veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 20, 2023

Mr. SANTOS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program for the provision of service dogs to eligible veterans, 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 “Service Dogs Assisting
5 Veterans Act” or the “SAVES Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM FOR PROVISION OF SERVICE**
7 **DOGS TO VETERANS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
9 fairs, acting through the Under Secretary for Health of
10 the Department of Veterans Affairs, shall establish a pro-

1 gram under which the Secretary may award grants, on
2 a competitive basis, to nonprofit organizations determined
3 eligible by the Secretary under subsection (b) to assist
4 such organizations in carrying out programs to provide
5 service dogs to eligible veterans.

6 (b) APPLICATIONS.—

7 (1) SUBMISSION.—To be eligible to receive a
8 grant under this section, a nonprofit organization
9 shall submit to the Secretary an application at such
10 time, in such manner, and containing such informa-
11 tion as the Secretary may require.

12 (2) ELEMENTS.—An application submitted
13 under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

14 (A) A proposal for the evaluation required
15 under subsection (d)(2).

16 (B) A description of, with respect to the
17 program to be planned, designed, established,
18 or operated using grant amounts, the following:

19 (i) The training to be provided to eli-
20 gible veterans by the organization in con-
21 nection with the program.

22 (ii) The training of dogs that will
23 serve as service dogs under the program.

1 (iii) The aftercare services to be pro-
2 vided to such dogs and eligible veterans by
3 the organization under the program.

4 (iv) The plan for publicizing the avail-
5 ability of such dogs under the program
6 through a marketing campaign that tar-
7 gets eligible veterans.

8 (v) The commitment of the organiza-
9 tion to have humane standards for ani-
10 mals.

11 (C) A statement certifying that the organi-
12 zation is accredited by the organization known
13 as “Assistance Dogs International”, or suc-
14 cessor organization, or another accreditation or-
15 ganization that the Secretary determines is
16 similarly widely recognized and has accredita-
17 tion standards that meet or exceed the stand-
18 ards of Assistance Dogs International.

19 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant under
20 this section may only use the grant amounts so received
21 to plan, design, establish, or operate one or more programs
22 that provide service dogs to eligible veterans.

23 (d) CONDITIONS.—As a condition of awarding a
24 grant to a nonprofit organization under this section, the

1 Secretary shall require that each such organization agree
2 to—

3 (1) provide equal access to service dogs to eligi-
4 ble veterans who are women; and

5 (2) conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of
6 the activities carried out by the organization using
7 grant amounts.

8 (e) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The total amount of grants
9 awarded to each nonprofit organization under this section
10 may not exceed \$2,000,000.

11 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) The term “covered disability” means any of
13 the following:

14 (A) Blindness or visual impairment.

15 (B) Loss of use of a limb, paralysis, or
16 other significant mobility issue.

17 (C) Loss of hearing.

18 (D) Traumatic brain injury.

19 (E) Post-traumatic stress disorder.

20 (F) Military sexual trauma.

21 (G) Any other disability that the Secretary
22 of Veterans Affairs considers appropriate.

23 (2) The term “covered service”, with respect to
24 a dog—

1 (A) means the conduct of work or perform-
2 ance of tasks by the dog—

3 (i) for the benefit of an individual
4 with a disability, including a physical or
5 sensory disability or a psychiatric, intellec-
6 tual, or other mental disability; and

7 (ii) directly related to the disability of
8 the individual; and

9 (B) does not include—

10 (i) the crime-deterrent effects of the
11 presence of the dog; or

12 (ii) the provision by the dog of emo-
13 tional support, well-being, comfort, or com-
14 panionship.

15 (3) The term “eligible veteran” means a vet-
16 eran who—

17 (A) is enrolled in the system of annual pa-
18 tient enrollment of the Department of Veterans
19 Affairs established and operated under section
20 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code; and

21 (B) has at least one covered disability.

22 (4) The term “service dog” means any dog that
23 is individually trained to provide covered service.

1 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act
3 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.

○