

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3636

To require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish a pilot program to identify and refer veterans for potential employment with Federal land management agencies, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 23, 2024

Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Ms. SINEMA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish a pilot program to identify and refer veterans for potential employment with Federal land management agencies, 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 “Hire Veterans Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM ON IDENTIFICATION, APPOINT-**
2 **MENT, OR REFERRAL OF VETERANS FOR PO-**
3 **TENTIAL EMPLOYMENT WITH FEDERAL LAND**
4 **MANAGEMENT AGENCIES.**

5 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

6 (1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
7 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
8 gress” means—

9 (A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of
10 the Senate;

11 (B) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
12 tion, and Forestry of the Senate;

13 (C) the Committee on Energy and Natural
14 Resources of the Senate;

15 (D) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of
16 the House of Representatives;

17 (E) the Committee on Agriculture of the
18 House of Representatives; and

19 (F) the Committee on Natural Resources
20 of the House of Representatives.

21 (2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
22 the Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

23 (3) FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY.—
24 The term “Federal land management agency”
25 means—

26 (A) the Forest Service;

1 (B) the National Park Service;

2 (C) the United States Fish and Wildlife
3 Service;

4 (D) the Bureau of Land Management; or

5 (E) the Bureau of Reclamation.

6 (4) NONCOMPETITIVE.—The term “noncompeti-
7 tive”, when used with respect to an appointment,
8 means an appointment made without regard to sub-
9 chapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States
10 Code, other than sections 3303 and 3328 of that
11 title.

12 (5) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term “pilot pro-
13 gram” means the pilot program established by the
14 Director under subsection (b).

15 (6) RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDEN-
16 TIAL.—The term “recognized postsecondary creden-
17 tial” has the meaning given the term in section 3 of
18 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29
19 U.S.C. 3102).

20 (7) VETERAN.—The term “veteran” has the
21 meaning given the term in section 101 of title 38,
22 United States Code.

23 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after
24 the date of enactment of this Act, the Director (in con-
25 sultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Sec-

1 retary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Agriculture)
2 shall establish a pilot program to recruit veterans with rel-
3 evant strengths and abilities and refer the veterans to su-
4 pervisory or nonsupervisory positions in Federal land
5 management agencies.

6 (c) PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION APPLICATION.—

7 (1) PUBLICATION.—The Director shall pub-
8 licize, and disseminate information about, the pilot
9 program on the website of the Office of Personnel
10 Management.

11 (2) APPLICATION.—A veteran seeking to par-
12 ticipate in the pilot program shall submit to the Di-
13 rector an application in such form, in such manner,
14 and containing such information as the Director
15 may require.

16 (d) TESTS OF STRENGTHS AND ABILITIES.—

17 (1) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 180 days after
18 the date of enactment of this Act, the Director (in
19 consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs,
20 the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of
21 Agriculture) shall issue guidance on the development
22 of individual tests to be administered for the pur-
23 poses of the pilot program to determine the
24 strengths and abilities of veterans for positions in

1 the following career fields at Federal land manage-
2 ment agencies:

3 (A) Outdoor recreation management.

4 (B) Management of volunteers.

5 (C) Fire planning and fire analysis.

6 (D) Firefighting.

7 (E) Aviation.

8 (F) Forest engineering.

9 (G) Inventory monitoring of land under the
10 management of a Federal land management
11 agency.

12 (H) Landscape restoration.

13 (I) Ecology.

14 (J) Sustainability of ecosystems.

15 (K) Archeology.

16 (L) Range management.

17 (M) Analysis of geospatial data.

18 (N) Biology.

19 (O) Geology.

20 (P) Land use.

21 (Q) Physical sciences.

22 (R) Civil Engineering.

23 (S) Hydrology.

24 (T) Land surveying.

25 (U) Water reclamation.

1 (V) Finance, budget, and administration.

2 (2) WAIVER.—For purposes of the pilot pro-
3 gram, the Director (in consultation with, as appro-
4 priate, the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary
5 of the Interior) may waive any requirement for a
6 recognized postsecondary credential for a position in
7 a career field described in paragraph (1), if the Di-
8 rector determines that such a waiver is necessary.

9 (3) ADMINISTRATION.—The head of a Federal
10 land management agency shall—

11 (A) administer a test developed described
12 in paragraph (1) to each veteran who applies
13 for participation in the pilot program;

14 (B) develop assessments to measure the
15 relative capacity and fitness of veterans de-
16 scribed in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph
17 for positions in the career fields described in
18 paragraph (1); and

19 (C) refer each veteran described in sub-
20 paragraph (A) to the official employment
21 website of the Federal Government.

22 (4) MANAGEMENT.—The Director (in consulta-
23 tion with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs) shall de-
24 velop a method to oversee and manage the employ-
25 ment of veterans within Federal land management

1 agencies in positions in the career fields that are
2 covered by the pilot program.

3 (e) APPOINTMENT AND REFERRAL.—The head of a
4 Federal land management agency (in consultation with the
5 Secretary of Veterans Affairs), with respect to a veteran
6 who has taken a test administered under subsection
7 (d)(3)(A)—

8 (1) if the veteran has demonstrated through the
9 test the necessary strengths and abilities for a va-
10 cant supervisory or nonsupervisory position in a ca-
11 reer field covered by the pilot program in the Fed-
12 eral land management agency, as determined by the
13 head of the Federal land management agency, may
14 make a noncompetitive career-conditional appoint-
15 ment of the veteran to that vacant position; or

16 (2) if the veteran has not demonstrated through
17 the test the necessary strengths and abilities for a
18 vacant supervisory or nonsupervisory position in a
19 career field covered by the pilot program in the Fed-
20 eral land management agency, as determined by the
21 head of the Federal land management agency—

22 (A) shall refer the veteran to a recruiter of
23 that Federal land management agency for par-
24 ticipation in a training program that the agency
25 shall establish for the purposes of this section,

1 which shall provide the veteran with the
2 strengths and abilities for a position in such a
3 career field;

4 (B) shall, after the participation by the
5 veteran in a training program described in sub-
6 paragraph (A), re-administer that test, for the
7 purpose of re-evaluation, to the veteran as fre-
8 quently as the head of the Federal land man-
9 agement agency determines appropriate until
10 the veteran demonstrates through the test the
11 necessary strengths and abilities; and

12 (C) may, if the veteran has demonstrated
13 through the test the necessary strengths and
14 abilities, make a noncompetitive career-condi-
15 tional appointment of the veteran to a position
16 in such a career field.

17 (f) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date
18 of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until the
19 termination of the pilot program, the Director (in con-
20 sultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the
21 heads of the Federal land management agencies) shall
22 submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report
23 on the pilot program.

1 (g) TERMINATION.—The pilot program shall termi-
2 nate on the date that is 5 years after the date on which
3 the Director establishes the pilot program.

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