119TH CONGRESS
1st Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT
119–310

SERVICE DOGS ASSISTING VETERANS ACT

SEPTEMBER 26, 2025.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. BOST, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 2605]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2605) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to nonprofit organizations to assist such organizations in carrying out programs to provide service dogs to eligible veterans, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

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59–006

The amendment is as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Service Dogs Assisting Veterans Act" or the "SAVES Act".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM TO AWARD GRANTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICE DOGS TO VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 24 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a pilot program under which the Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to nonprofit entities to provide service dogs to eligible veterans.

(b) APPLICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a nonprofit entity shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such commitments and information as the Secretary may require.

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

(A) A proposal for the provision of service dogs to eligible veterans, including how the nonprofit entity will communicate with the Secretary to ensure that the use of the grant funds results in an increased number of eligible veterans who are provided with service dogs.

(B) A description of the following services or commitments to be provided by the nonprofit entity:

(i) The training that will be provided to eligible veterans who receive service dogs under the pilot program.

(ii) The training of dogs that will serve as service dogs provided to eligible veterans under the program.

(iii) Any support or services other than training under clauses (i) and (ii) that will be provided for such dogs and eligible veterans.

(iv) The plan for publicizing the availability of such service dogs through a marketing campaign that targets eligible veterans.

(v) The commitment to humane treatment standards for service dogs.

(C) Documentation that demonstrates that the nonprofit entity has experience in training dogs as service dogs.

(D) The demonstrated experience of the nonprofit entity in training service dogs in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

(c) AGREEMENT REQUIRED.—If the Secretary approves an application submitted by a nonprofit entity under subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall require the entity, as a condition of the receipt of a grant under the pilot program to enter into an agreement under which the entity agrees to—

(1) notify each veteran who receives a service dog provided using grant funds that the service dog is being paid for, in whole or in part, by the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) inform each such veteran of the benefits and services available from the Secretary for the veteran and the service dog;

(3) not charge a fee to a veteran receiving a service dog provided using grant funds; and

(4) adhere to such other terms, conditions, and limitations as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(d) AMOUNT OF GRANTS.—The Secretary shall make a grant in an amount that does not exceed $2,000,000 to each entity that enters into an agreement with the Secretary under subsection (c). The Secretary shall establish intervals of payment for the administration of each such grant.

(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant to plan, develop, implement, and manage one or more programs that provide service dogs to eligible veterans.

(2) LIMITATIONS.—The Secretary may establish—

(A) a maximum amount that can be used by a grant recipient to cover administrative expenses for each grant awarded under this section; and

(B) other conditions or limitations on the use of grant amounts under this section.

(f) VETERINARY INSURANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), the Secretary may provide to each veteran who receives a service dog through a grant under this section a commercially available veterinary insurance policy for the service dog.

(2) CONTINUATION.—If the Secretary provides a veterinary insurance policy to a veteran under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall continue to provide the policy to the veteran without regard to the continuation or termination of the pilot program, except as provided in paragraph (3).

(3) DISCONTINUATION.—The Secretary shall discontinue the provision of a veterinary insurance policy under paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines doing so would be in the best interest of the veteran, the service dog, or the Federal Government.

(g) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide training and technical assistance related to grant application and administration to applicants for and recipients of grants under this section.

(h) OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary—

(A) shall establish such oversight and monitoring requirements as the Secretary determines appropriate to ensure that grant amounts awarded under this section are used appropriately; and

(B) may take such actions as the Secretary determines necessary to address any issues identified through the enforcement of such requirements.

(2) REPORTS AND ANSWERS.—The Secretary may require each recipient of a grant under this section to provide, in such form as may be prescribed by the Secretary, such reports or answers in writing to specific questions, surveys, or questionnaires as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out the pilot program.

(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term "eligible veteran" means a veteran who—

(A) is enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, or is otherwise entitled to receive such care and services under subsection (c)(2) of such section;

(B) has been prescribed a service dog by the Secretary; and

(C) has one or more covered conditions.

(2) The term "covered condition" means any of the following disabilities, conditions, or diagnoses for which the Secretary determines, based upon medical judgment, that it is optimal for the veteran to manage the disability, condition, or diagnosis and live independently through the assistance of a trained service dog:

(A) Blindness or visual impairment.

(B) Loss of use of a limb, paralysis, or other significant mobility issue, including mental health mobility.

(C) Loss of hearing.

(D) Post-traumatic stress disorder.

(E) Traumatic brain injury.

(F) Any other disability, condition, or diagnosis for which the Secretary determines, based on medical judgment, that it is optimal for the veteran to manage the disability, condition, or diagnosis, and live independently through the assistance of a service dog.

(3) The term "service dog" means a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

(j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2031.

(k) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out a pilot program under this section shall terminate on September 30, 2031.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF PENSION.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "November 30, 2031" and inserting "February 28, 2033".

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 2605, the "Service Dogs Assisting Veterans Act," or the "SAVES Act," was introduced by Representative Morgan Luttrell of Texas on April 02, 2025. H.R. 2605, as amended, would create a pilot to award grants to nonprofit entities to provide service dogs to eligible veterans.

Background and Need for Legislation

Section 1: Short title

This act would be cited as the “Service Dogs Assisting Veterans Act” or the “SAVES Act.”

Section 2: Department of Veterans Affairs pilot program to award grants for the provision of service dogs to veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently provides benefits for guide dogs or service dogs for eligible veterans who have been diagnosed with a visual, hearing, or substantial mobility impairment when VA determines, based upon medical judgment, that the veteran could live independently through the assistance of a trained guide or service dog.[1] These benefits include a commercially available veterinary insurance policy; hardware, or repairs or replacements for hardware, to perform the tasks necessary for a dog to assist the veteran; and reimbursement for travel expenses to obtain a dog.[2] However, while the statute permits VA to provide guide or service dogs, VA currently does not do so. Veterans must obtain these dogs through other means.[3]

Under this section, VA would be required to create a 5-year pilot program for grants to nonprofits to provide service dogs to eligible veterans. Grant recipients who are approved would receive up to $2 million in funding. A veteran would be eligible for a service dog provided through the pilot program if the veteran is enrolled in VA hospital care and medical services or is otherwise entitled to receive such care and services under the statute. Conditions covered would include blindness or visual impairment, a significant mobility issue, loss of hearing, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and any other condition the VA Secretary determines to be eligible.

The section continues the legacy of the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers (PAWS) for Veterans Therapy Act [P.L. 117–37]. The PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act removed a previous requirement that veterans with a mental illness, including PTSD, also have mobility impairment before being referred for a service dog to manage mental illness. It also extended VA’s veterinary insurance benefit to include service dogs provided for mental illness.[4]

The Committee notes VA’s concern related to including PTSD and TBI as covered conditions based on a study showing that emotional support dogs and service dogs were similarly effective in mitigating PTSD symptoms of veterans. The Committee believes the nature of a pilot program is to determine the operational feasibility and potential effectiveness of a program to solve the problem at issue. The Committee encourages VA to use the pilot program to build on the body of evidence for effective PTSD treatments. VA opposed including TBI as a qualifying condition on the ground that service dogs are already recognized as aiding veterans’ mobility issues. The Committee believes that the pilot program is an important opportunity to better understand whether and how service

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[1] 38 C.F.R. Section 17.148.
[2] 38 C.F.R. Section 17.148.
[3] Sometimes, nonprofits cover the expense of purchasing a trained service dog.
[4] The PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act also included a pilot to increase the availability of an adjunctive treatment for PTSD.

dogs can be used to mitigate the detrimental impact that TBI has on a veteran's functioning and quality of life.

The Committee has heard from veterans who have better functioning and quality of life because of their service dogs. Unfortunately, there may be delays from the time VA prescribes a service dog to the time a veteran is fully paired with a service dog that has graduated training. The Committee believes this pilot is an opportunity to help reduce delays by increasing the number of dogs available for veterans.

Section 3: Extension of certain limits on payments of pension

Under current law (38 U.S.C. § 5503(d)), the amount of VA pension paid to a veteran with no spouse or child, a veteran's surviving spouse with no child, and a veteran's' child who is admitted to a VA or Medicaid sponsored nursing facility is capped at $90 a month. This section would cover the costs of the other sections of this bill by extending this pension limitation by fifteen months to February 28, 2033. Because they receive government sponsored care in a nursing home, these pension beneficiaries do not require the full amount of pension to cover their cost of living. The Committee believes this short-term extension of the current limit on pension payments is a reasonable way to cover the costs associated with the other sections of this bill.

HEARINGS

On June 12, 2025, the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 2605 and other bills pending before the subcommittee. The following witnesses testified:

The Honorable Gregory F. Murphy, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District, North Carolina; The Honorable Morgan Luttrell, U.S. House of Representatives, 8th Congressional District, Texas; The Honorable Jennifer A. Kiggans, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District, Virginia; The Honorable Abraham J. Hamadeh, U.S. House of Representatives, 8th Congressional District, Arizona; The Honorable Kimberlyn King-Hinds, U.S. House of Representatives, District At Large, Northern Mariana Islands; The Honorable John J. McGuire, U.S. House of Representatives, 5th Congressional District, Virginia; The Honorable Joseph D. Morelle, U.S. House of Representatives, 25th Congressional District, New York; The Honorable Nikki Budzinski, U.S. House of Representatives, 13th Congressional District, Illinois; Dr. Antoinette V. Shappell, Deputy Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Ilse Wiechers, Deputy Executive Director, Office of Mental Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Randy Johnson, Constituent, District At Large, Northern Mariana Islands; Cole T. Lyle, Director, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; David Coker, President, Fisher House Foundation; John Schmitt, Chief Executive Officer, iXpressGenes, Inc.; Caira Benson, Caregiver Fellow, Elizabeth Dole Foundation.

The following individuals and organizations submitted statements for the record:

K9s for Warriors, Quality of Life Foundation, National Association of State Veterans Homes, Military Officers Association of

America, National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations, iXpressGenes, Inc., Paralyzed Veterans of America, The Honorable Joseph D. Morelle, Concerned Veterans for America, USAA, Student Veterans of America, American Academy of Physician Associates, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

SUBCOMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On July 23, 2025, the Subcommittee on Health was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2605.

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On July 23, 2025, the full Committee met in open markup session, a quorum being present, to consider H.R. 2605. During consideration of the bill, the following amendments were considered:

An amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Representative Morgan Luttrell of Texas would make several technical and conforming changes to section two of the underlying bill that would make the pilot available only to credible nonprofits; give the Secretary the authority to minimize the expense of the program as necessary; make clear that a prescription for a service dog is based on a VA provider's best medical judgment; and offset the anticipated $60 million cost of section two of the SAVES Act using the pension program under 38 U.S.C. § 5503. The amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to by voice vote.

An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Chairman Mike Bost of Illinois would require that a grant applicant have demonstrated experience training service dogs in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq). The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by voice vote.

A motion by Ranking Member Mark Takano of California to report H.R. 2605, as amended, favorably to the House of Representatives was agreed to by voice vote.

COMMITTEE VOTES

In compliance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, no recorded votes were taken on amendments or in connection with ordering H.R. 2605, as amended, reported to the House.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII and clause (2)(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's performance goals and objectives of H.R. 2605, as amended, are to create a pilot program to provide service dogs for veterans to improve their mental health and independence.

EARMARKS AND TAX AND TARIFF BENEFITS

H.R. 2605, as amended, does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

The Committee adopts as its own the cost estimate on H.R. 2605, as amended, prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget.

BUDGET AUTHORITY AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause (3)(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following is the cost estimate for H.R. 2605, as amended, provided by the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974:

At a Glance

H.R. 2605, Service Dogs Assisting Veterans Act
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on July 23, 2025

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2025	2025-2030	2025-2035
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	9	-48
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	9	-48
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	31	42

Increases *net direct spending* in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	< $2.5 billion	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	Yes
		Mandate Effects	
Increases *on-budget deficits* in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	< $5 billion	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

The bill would:

- Require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a pilot program to award grants to nonprofit entities for the provision of service dogs to veterans
- Direct VA to provide veterinary insurance for such service dogs
- Extend the reduction of pensions that VA pays to veterans and survivors residing in Medicaid nursing homes

Estmated budgetary effects would mainly stem from:

- Providing grants to nonprofit organizations
- Funding veterinary insurance for service dogs
- Reducing pension payments

Bill summary: H.R. 2605 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a pilot program to award grants to nonprofit entities to provide service dogs to eligible veterans over the 2027–2031 period. The bill also would require VA to provide veterinary insurance for those dogs. Finally, the bill would extend a temporary limitation on certain pension payments through February 2033.

Estimated Federal cost: The estimated budgetary effects of H.R. 2605 are shown in Table 1. The costs of the legislation fall within budget functions 550 (health) and 700 (veterans benefits and services).

TABLE 1.—ESTIMATED BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF H.R. 2605

	By fiscal year, millions of dollars—												
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2025–2030	2025–2035
INCREASES OR DECREASES (−) IN DIRECT SPENDING													
Estimated Budget Authority	0	*	2	2	2	3	3	−40	−20	*	*	9	−48
Estimated Outlays	0	*	2	2	2	3	3	−40	−20	*	*	9	−48
INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION													
Estimated Authorization	0	*	8	8	8	7	7	1	1	1	1	31	42
Estimated Outlays	0	*	8	8	8	7	7	1	1	1	1	31	42

* = between zero and $500,000.

Basis of estimate: For this estimate, CBO assumes that H.R. 2605 will be enacted near the beginning of fiscal year 2026 and that outlays will follow historical spending patterns for affected programs.

Provisions that affect spending subject to appropriation and direct spending: Section 2 of H.R. 2605 would require VA to establish a five-year pilot program to provide grants to nonprofit entities for the provision of service dogs to eligible veterans beginning in 2027. The program also would require VA to provide veterinary insurance for dogs acquired under the program, including during the period after the pilot program expires.

The bill authorizes the appropriation of $10 million annually over the 2027–2031 period. CBO expects that the authorized amounts would cover the costs of awarding grants to nonprofit entities and providing veterinary insurance for dogs acquired through the program. Based on information from VA and similar programs, CBO estimates that approximately 1,000 veterans would receive dogs under the program. Under the bill, VA would be required to continue providing veterinary insurance for those dogs after the pilot ends. CBO estimates that the cost of providing insurance coverage over the 2032–2035 period would total $4 million, assuming an average annual cost of $1,100 per dog. In total, CBO estimates that implementing section 2 would cost $54 million over the 2025–2035 period.

CBO expects that some of the costs of implementing the bill would be paid from the Toxic Exposures Fund (TEF) established by Public Law 117–168, the Honoring our PACT Act. The TEF is a mandatory appropriation that VA uses to pay for health care, disability claims processing, medical research, and IT modernization that benefit veterans who were exposed to environmental hazards.

Additional spending from the TEF would occur if legislation increases the costs of similar activities that benefit veterans with such exposure. Thus, in addition to increasing spending subject to appropriation, enacting section 2 would increase amounts paid from the TEF, which are classified as direct spending. CBO projects that the proportion of costs paid by the TEF will grow over time based on the amount of formerly discretionary appropriations that CBO expects will be provided through the mandatory appropriation as specified in the Honoring our PACT Act.[1]

CBO estimates that over the 2025–2035 period, implementing section 2 would increase spending subject to appropriation by $42 million and direct spending by $12 million.

Direct spending: In addition to expanding benefits that would partly be covered by the TEF, enacting H.R. 2605 would affect direct spending by extending a statutory limitation on VA pension payments. In total, enacting the bill would decrease net direct spending by $48 million over the 2025–2035 period (see Table 2).

Under current law, VA reduces pension payments to veterans and survivors who reside in Medicaid nursing homes to $90 per month. That required reduction expires November 30, 2031. Section 3 of H.R. 2605 would extend that reduction for 15 months, through February 28, 2033. CBO estimates that extending that requirement would reduce VA benefits by $10 million per month. As a result of that reduction in beneficiaries' income, Medicaid would pay more of the cost of their care, increasing spending for that program by $6 million per month. Thus, enacting section 3 would reduce net direct spending by $60 million over the 2025–2035 period.

TABLE 2.—ESTIMATED CHANGES IN DIRECT SPENDING UNDER H.R. 2605

	By fiscal year, millions of dollars—												
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2025–2030	2025–2035
Service Dogs:													
Estimated Budget Authority	0	*	2	2	2	3	3	*	*	*	*	9	12
Estimated Outlays	0	*	2	2	2	3	3	*	*	*	*	9	12
Pensions and Medicaid:													
Estimated Budget Authority	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	−40	−20	0	0	0	−60
Estimated Outlays	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	−40	−20	0	0	0	−60
Total Changes:													
Estimated Budget Authority	0	*	2	2	2	3	3	−40	−20	*	*	9	−48
Estimated Outlays	0	*	2	2	2	3	3	−40	−20	*	*	9	−48

* = between zero and $500,000.

Spending subject to appropriation: The discussion above in "Provisions that Affect Spending Subject to Appropriation and Direct Spending" describes the costs of implementing a program to provide service dogs to eligible veterans and covering the cost of veterinary insurance for those dogs. Establishing that program would increase spending subject to appropriation by $42 million over the 2025–2035 period, CBO estimates.

Pay-As-You-Go considerations: The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 establishes budget-reporting and enforcement procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or revenues. The net changes in outlays that are subject to those pay-as-you-go procedures are shown in Table 1.

Increase in long-term net direct spending and deficits: CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2605 would not increase net direct spend-

[1] For additional information about estimated spending from the TEF, see Congressional Budget Office, "Toxic Exposures Fund—January 2025 Baseline" (January 2025), https://tinyurl.com/465ytckb.

ing by more than $2.5 billion in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2605 would not increase on-budget deficits by more than $5 billion in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036.

Mandates: The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

Estimate prepared by: Federal Costs: Noah Callahan (for veterans' health care); Logan Smith (for pensions and Medicaid); Mandates: Lucy Marret.

Estimate reviewed by: David Newman, Chief, Defense, International Affairs, and Veterans' Affairs Cost Estimates Unit; Kathleen FitzGerald, Chief, Public and Private Mandates Unit; Christina Hawley Anthony; Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

Estimate approved by: Phillip L. Swagel, Director, Congressional Budget Office.

Federal Mandates Statement

Section 423 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act (as amended by Section 101(a)(2) of the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act, P.L. 104–4 is inapplicable to H.R.2605, as amended.

Advisory Committee Statement

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act would be created by H.R. 2605, as amended.

Applicability to Legislative Branch

The Committee finds that H.R. 2605, as amended, does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

Statement on Duplication of Federal Programs

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that no provision of H.R. 2605, as amended, establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

Section-by-Section Analysis of the Legislation

Section 1: Short title

This section would establish the short title as the "Service Dogs Assisting Veterans Act" or the "SAVES Act."

Section 2: Department of Veterans Affairs pilot program to award grants for the provision of service dogs to veterans

This section would require the VA Secretary to create a pilot program to award grants, on a competitive basis, to nonprofits to provide service dogs to eligible veterans. Applicants under this section would be required to submit a proposal for use of the grant funds to increase the number of eligible veterans who are provided with service dogs. The applicant would have to commit to training service dogs and providing training for veterans prescribed service dogs. The application would specify plans for publicizing the availability of service dogs through a marketing campaign that targets eligible veterans. The applicant would also have to commit to humane treatment standards for service dogs and demonstrate its experience training service dogs in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 [P.L. 101–336].

Under this section, a grant recipient would be required to notify each veteran who receives a service dog that VA funds were used to pay for the service dog. The recipient would also have to inform the veteran of the benefits and services available for the veteran and the service dog. The grant recipient would not be allowed to charge a fee to a veteran receiving a service dog under this bill.

A grant under this bill would not exceed $2 million to any one entity. A grant recipient would have to use the grant to plan, develop, implement, and manage one or more programs that provide service dogs to eligible veterans. The Secretary would have the authority to cap the amount of grant funding a recipient could use for administrative expenses and establish any other conditions or limitations on use of the grant funds.

Under this section, the Secretary would have the authority to provide a commercially available insurance policy for the service dog, though such insurance policy would not be required. If the Secretary did provide such policy, the Secretary would have to continue to provide the policy to the veteran regardless of pilot continuation or termination. However, the Secretary would have the authority to discontinue such policy if the Secretary determines doing so would be in the best interest of the veteran, the service dog, or the federal government.

This section would allow VA to provide training and technical assistance for grant application and administration. It would also require VA to establish oversight and monitoring requirements to enforce the appropriate use of grant funds.

Finally, this section would provide definitions for the relevant terms in the bill and authorize $10 million in appropriations for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2031. The authority to carry out the pilot program would terminate on September 30, 2031.

Section 3: Extension of certain limits on payments of pension

Section 3 would extend the termination date of limitations on VA pension payments under 38 U.S.C. 5503(d)(1) from November 30, 2021, to February 28, 2033.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE

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PART IV—GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

* * * * * * *

CHAPTER 55—MINORS, INCOMPETENTS, AND OTHER WARDS

* * * * * * *

§ 5503. Hospitalized veterans and estates of incompetent institutionalized veterans

(a)(1)(A) Where any veteran having neither spouse nor child is being furnished domiciliary care by the Department, no pension in excess of $90 per month shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the third full calendar month following the month of admission for such care.

(B) Except as provided in subparagraph (D) of this paragraph, where any veteran having neither spouse nor child is being furnished nursing home care by the Department, no pension in excess of $90 per month shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the third full calendar month following the month of admission for such care. Any amount in excess of $90 per month to which the veteran would be entitled but for the application of the preceding sentence shall be deposited in a revolving fund at the Department medical facility which furnished the veteran nursing care, and such amount shall be available for obligation without fiscal year limitation to help defray operating expenses of that facility.

(C) No pension in excess of $90 per month shall be paid to or for a veteran having neither spouse nor child for any period after the month in which such veteran is readmitted for care described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of this paragraph and furnished by the Department if such veteran is readmitted within six months of a period of care in connection with which pension was reduced pursuant to subparagraph (A) or (B) of this paragraph.

(D) In the case of a veteran being furnished nursing home care by the Department and with respect to whom subparagraph (B) of this paragraph requires a reduction in pension, such reduction shall not be made for a period of up to three additional calendar months after the last day of the third month referred to in such subparagraph if the Secretary determines that the primary purpose for the furnishing of such care during such additional period is for the Department to provide such veteran with a prescribed program of rehabilitation services, under chapter 17 of this title, designed to restore such veteran's ability to function within such veteran's family and community. If the Secretary determines that it is necessary, after such period, for the veteran to continue such program of rehabilitation services in order to achieve the purposes of such program and that the primary purpose of furnishing nursing home care to the veteran continues to be the provision of such program to the veteran, the reduction in pension required by subparagraph (B) of this paragraph shall not be made for the number of calendar months that the Secretary determines is necessary for the veteran to achieve the purposes of such program.

(2) The provisions of paragraph (1) shall also apply to a veteran being furnished such care who has a spouse but whose pension is payable under section 1521(b) of this title. In such a case, the Secretary may apportion and pay to the spouse, upon an affirmative showing of hardship, all or any part of the amounts in excess of the amount payable to the veteran while being furnished such care which would be payable to the veteran if pension were payable under section 1521(c) of this title.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or any other provision of law, no reduction shall be made in the pension of any veteran for any part of the period during which the veteran is furnished hospital treatment, or institutional or domiciliary care, for Hansen's disease, by the United States or any political subdivision thereof.

(c) Where any veteran in receipt of an aid and attendance allowance described in subsection (r) or (t) of section 1114 of this title is hospitalized at Government expense, such allowance shall be discontinued from the first day of the second calendar month which begins after the date of the veteran's admission for such hospitalization for so long as such hospitalization continues. Any discontinuance required by administrative regulation, during hospitalization of a veteran by the Department, of increased pension based on need of regular aid and attendance or additional compensation based on need of regular aid and attendance as described in subsection (*l*) or (m) of section 1114 of this title, shall not be effective earlier than the first day of the second calendar month which begins after the date of the veteran's admission for hospitalization. In case a veteran affected by this subsection leaves a hospital against medical advice and is thereafter admitted to hospitalization within six months from the date of such departure, such allowance, increased pension, or additional compensation, as the case may be, shall be discontinued from the date of such readmission for so long as such hospitalization continues.

(d)(1) For the purposes of this subsection—

(A) the term "Medicaid plan" means a State plan for medical assistance referred to in section 1902(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)); and

(B) the term "nursing facility" means a nursing facility described in section 1919 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r), other than a facility that is a State home with respect to which the Secretary makes per diem payments for nursing home care pursuant to section 1741(a) of this title.

(2) If a veteran having neither spouse nor child is covered by a Medicaid plan for services furnished such veteran by a nursing facility, no pension in excess of $90 per month shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the month of admission to such nursing facility.

(3) Notwithstanding any provision of title XIX of the Social Security Act, the amount of the payment paid a nursing facility pursuant to a Medicaid plan for services furnished a veteran may not be reduced by any amount of pension permitted to be paid such veteran under paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(4) A veteran is not liable to the United States for any payment of pension in excess of the amount permitted under this subsection that is paid to or for the veteran by reason of the inability or failure of the Secretary to reduce the veteran's pension under this subsection unless such inability or failure is the result of a willful concealment by the veteran of information necessary to make a reduction in pension under this subsection.

(5)(A) The provisions of this subsection shall apply with respect to a surviving spouse having no child in the same manner as they apply to a veteran having neither spouse nor child.

(B) The provisions of this subsection shall apply with respect to a child entitled to pension under section 1542 of this title in the same manner as they apply to a veteran having neither spouse nor child.

(6) The costs of administering this subsection shall be paid for from amounts available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the payment of compensation and pension.

(7) This subsection expires on [November 30, 2031] *February 28, 2033*.

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