

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1997

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a pilot program on posttraumatic growth, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 29, 2019

Mr. RYAN (for himself, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Mr. WATKINS, Mr. SUOZZI, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a pilot program on posttraumatic growth, 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 “Veterans
5 Posttraumatic Growth Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) There is a shortage of adequate, timely, and
2 effective mental health care available to veterans
3 across the United States.

4 (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs con-
5 tinues to highlight veterans mental health care and
6 suicide prevention as a key priority.

7 (3) There is an opportunity to explore effective
8 alternative treatments focused on the area of
9 posttraumatic growth.

10 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM ON POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH.**

11 (a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
12 shall conduct a pilot program to study the effectiveness
13 and benefits of nonprofit posttraumatic growth programs
14 to determine—

15 (1) the outcomes of such programs in contrast
16 to traditional models of mental health care;

17 (2) the possible integration of such nonprofit
18 programs into the mental health care programs pro-
19 vided by the Secretary; and

20 (3) the budgetary impacts of such integration.

21 (b) REVIEW AND EVALUATION.—In developing the
22 pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

23 (1) review relevant literature to summarize the
24 existing knowledge regarding posttraumatic growth
25 programs; and

1 (2) evaluate such programs.

2 (c) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the
3 pilot program under subsection (a) for a two-year period
4 beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of
5 the enactment of this Act.

6 (d) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall select more
7 than one location at which to carry out the pilot program
8 under subsection (a), of which at least one location shall
9 include a rural area.

10 (e) PARTICIPANTS.—

11 (1) ELIGIBILITY.—A veteran is eligible to par-
12 ticipate in the pilot program under subsection (a) if
13 the Secretary determines that the veteran is—

14 (A) not at known immediate risk of at-
15 tempting suicide; and

16 (B) not participating in traditional mental
17 health treatment.

18 (2) FEMALE VETERANS.—Not fewer than four
19 groups of veterans participating in the pilot program
20 under subsection (a) shall consist only of female vet-
21 erans.

22 (f) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—The Secretary
23 shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) by
24 entering into an agreement with one or more nonprofit
25 organizations that—

1 (1) have staff with expertise in evidence-based
2 care and experience working with veterans;

3 (2) have experience in the science of
4 posttraumatic growth; and

5 (3) uses a standardized, evaluated, and com-
6 prehensive curriculum.

7 (g) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
8 on which the pilot program under subsection (a) is com-
9 pleted, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report
10 on the pilot program, including a comparison of the care
11 provided under the pilot program and the clinical care
12 model of the Department.

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