

# Union Calendar No. 572

118<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 7342

[Report No. 118-676]

To establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2024

Mr. VALADAO (for himself and Mr. MCGARVEY) introduced the following bill;  
which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

Additional sponsors: Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. NEGUSE, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. PETERSEN, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. LAWLER, and Mr. CROW

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

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 italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on February 13, 2024]

# **A BILL**

To establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal  
Access, 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 Accessibility*  
5 *Advisory Committee Act of 2024”.*

6 **SEC. 2. VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL AC-**  
7 **CESS.**

8 *(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—*

9 *(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after*  
10 *the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of*  
11 *Veterans Affairs shall establish within the Depart-*  
12 *ment of Veterans Affairs an advisory committee on*  
13 *matters relating to accessibility of the Department for*  
14 *individuals with disabilities.*

15 *(2) DESIGNATION.—The advisory committee es-*  
16 *tablished by paragraph (1) shall be known as the*  
17 *“Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access” (in*  
18 *this section the “Advisory Committee”).*

19 *(b) MEMBERSHIP.—*

20 *(1) VOTING MEMBERS.—The Advisory Committee*  
21 *shall be composed of 15 voting members, appointed by*  
22 *the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. In appointing such*  
23 *members, the Secretary shall ensure the following:*

1           (A) *Four are veterans with disabilities, in-*  
2           *cluding mobility impairment, hearing, visual,*  
3           *and mental or cognitive disabilities.*

4           (B) *Four are experts on issues described in*  
5           *subsection (f)(1)(A) or the provisions of law set*  
6           *forth under subsection (f)(1)(B).*

7           (C) *Two are employees of the Department,*  
8           *one from the Section 508 Office and one from the*  
9           *Architectural Accessibility Program, who oversee*  
10          *the compliance of the Department with Federal*  
11          *accessibility laws.*

12          (D) *Five are representatives nominated by*  
13          *national veterans service organizations that ad-*  
14          *vocate for veterans with physical, sensory, men-*  
15          *tal, or cognitive disabilities.*

16          (2) *EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.—The Advisory Com-*  
17          *mittee shall also include four ex officio members (or*  
18          *their designees):*

19                 (A) *The Under Secretary for Health.*

20                 (B) *The Under Secretary for Benefits.*

21                 (C) *The Under Secretary for Memorial Af-*  
22                 *fairs.*

23                 (D) *The chairperson of the Architectural*  
24                 *and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board*  
25                 *(known as the “Access Board”).*

1       (c) *TERMS; VACANCIES.*—

2               (1) *TERMS.*—*A member of the Advisory Com-*  
3       *mittee shall be appointed for a term of two years. The*  
4       *Secretary may reappoint members to the Advisory*  
5       *Committee for such additional two-year terms as the*  
6       *Secretary determines appropriate.*

7               (2) *VACANCIES.*—*The Secretary shall fill a va-*  
8       *cancy in the Advisory Committee in the same manner*  
9       *as the original appointment not later than 180 days*  
10       *after such vacancy occurs.*

11       (d) *MEETINGS.*—

12               (1) *FREQUENCY.*—*The Advisory Committee shall*  
13       *meet not less frequently than twice each year.*

14               (2) *SUBCOMMITTEES.*—*The Advisory Committee*  
15       *may form subcommittees, which shall meet as often as*  
16       *required.*

17               (3) *QUORUM.*—*A majority of the members of the*  
18       *Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum.*

19       (e) *CHAIRPERSON.*—*Members of the Advisory Com-*  
20       *mittee shall select a Chairperson from among the members*  
21       *of the Advisory Committee. If the position of Chairperson*  
22       *becomes vacant, the members of the Advisory Committee*  
23       *shall select a new Chairperson not later than 30 days after*  
24       *the date on which the position became vacant.*

25       (f) *DUTIES.*—

1           (1) *REQUIREMENT TO CONSULT AND SEEK AD-*  
2 *VICE.*—*On a regular basis, the Secretary shall consult*  
3 *with and seek the advice of the Advisory Committee—*

4           (A) *on improving the accessibility of the*  
5 *Department for individuals with disabilities, in-*  
6 *cluding improving—*

7                   (i) *the accessibility of information of*  
8 *the Department, including electronic infor-*  
9 *mation;*

10                   (ii) *the accessibility of the services and*  
11 *benefits furnished by the Department;*

12                   (iii) *the accessibility of the facilities of*  
13 *the Department;*

14                   (iv) *the accessibility of facilities of*  
15 *health care providers furnishing care or*  
16 *services under the Veterans Community*  
17 *Care Program under section 1703 of title*  
18 *38, United States Code; and*

19                   (v) *the acquisition process of the De-*  
20 *partment to ensure that products and serv-*  
21 *ices, including information technology and*  
22 *information and communication technology*  
23 *(as defined in the standards issued by the*  
24 *Architectural and Transportation Barriers*  
25 *Compliance Board pursuant to section 508*

1                   *of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.*  
2                   *794d)), are accessible when purchased; and*  
3                   *(B) for ensuring the compliance of the De-*  
4                   *partment with provisions of law relating to dis-*  
5                   *ability and accessibility, including—*

6                   *(i) the Americans with Disabilities Act*  
7                   *of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12184 et seq.);*

8                   *(ii) sections 504 and 508 of the Reha-*  
9                   *ilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791, 794,*  
10                  *and 794d);*

11                  *(iii) the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5*  
12                  *U.S.C. 301 note);*

13                  *(iv) the 21st Century Integrated Dig-*  
14                  *ital Experience Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 note);*

15                  *(v) the Architectural Barriers Act of*  
16                  *1968 (Public Law 90–480); and*

17                  *(vi) such other provisions of Federal*  
18                  *law as may be that ensure equal access to*  
19                  *Federal facilities, benefits, or services for in-*  
20                  *dividuals with disabilities.*

21                  (2) *PROVISION OF ADVICE.—In providing advice*  
22                  *to the Secretary, the Advisory Committee shall, focus-*  
23                  *ing on the areas of greatest need for the Depart-*  
24                  *ment—*

1           (A) assess the disability access needs of vet-  
2           erans, the public, and Department employees for  
3           full access to the Department's information, serv-  
4           ices, and benefits by reviewing relevant informa-  
5           tion, such as filed complaints by people with dis-  
6           abilities or physical assessments of the Depart-  
7           ment's facilities;

8           (B) provide assessments of accessibility at  
9           the Department and the compliance of the De-  
10          partment with applicable provisions of law relat-  
11          ing to disability and accessibility; and

12          (C) provide advice on improving accessi-  
13          bility at the Department, including the accessi-  
14          bility of all—

15                  (i) communications, including internal  
16                  and public facing;

17                  (ii) services and benefits; and

18                  (iii) facilities.

19          (3) *REPORTS.*—

20                  (A) *REPORTS TO THE SECRETARY.*—Not  
21                  later than two years after the date of the first  
22                  meeting of the Advisory Committee, and not less  
23                  frequently than once every two years thereafter,  
24                  the Advisory Committee shall submit to the Sec-



1            *retary a report that, focusing on areas of greatest*  
2            *need for the Department—*

3                    *(i) identifies and assesses access bar-*  
4                    *riers affecting veterans, the public, and em-*  
5                    *ployees of the Department;*

6                    *(ii) determines the extent to which the*  
7                    *programs and activities of the Department*  
8                    *address the barriers identified in clause (i),*  
9                    *including compliance of the Department*  
10                   *with provisions of law relating to accessi-*  
11                   *bility law and reporting;*

12                   *(iii) provides recommendations and ac-*  
13                   *cess priorities to improve the accessibility of*  
14                   *the Department's services, benefits, informa-*  
15                   *tion, technology, and facilities;*

16                   *(iv) provides a description of access*  
17                   *improvements and assesses the Department's*  
18                   *implementation of recommendations from*  
19                   *previous reports of the Advisory Committee,*  
20                   *including any unmet recommendations that*  
21                   *remain necessary for improving accessi-*  
22                   *bility for the Department; and*

23                   *(v) provides any recommendations for*  
24                   *legislation, administrative action, or other*

1           *actions that the Advisory Committee deter-*  
2           *mines appropriate.*

3           *(B) REPORTS TO CONGRESS AND FEDERAL*  
4           *AGENCIES.—*

5           *(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90*  
6           *days after the receipt of a report required*  
7           *under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall*  
8           *submit to the appropriate congressional*  
9           *committees a copy of such report and any*  
10          *comments and recommendations of the Sec-*  
11          *retary concerning such report that the Sec-*  
12          *retary determines appropriate.*

13          *(ii) AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC.—*  
14          *The Secretary shall publish on a publicly*  
15          *accessible website of the Department such*  
16          *report and such comments and rec-*  
17          *ommendations as may have been submitted*  
18          *along with such report.*

19          *(iii) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL*  
20          *COMMITTEES.—In this subparagraph, the*  
21          *term “appropriate congressional commit-*  
22          *tees” means—*

23                  *(I) the Committees on Veterans’*  
24                  *Affairs of the Senate and House of*  
25                  *Representatives;*

1                   (II) *the Special Committee on*  
2                   *Aging of the Senate; and*

3                   (III) *the Committee on Education*  
4                   *and the Workforce of the House of Rep-*  
5                   *resentatives.*

6           (g) *ADVISORY COMMITTEE PERSONNEL AND RE-*  
7 *SOURCE MATTERS.—*

8                   (1) *COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—A member of*  
9                   *the Commission who is not an officer or employee of*  
10                   *the Federal Government shall not be compensated for*  
11                   *the performance of the duties of the Advisory Com-*  
12                   *mittee.*

13                   (2) *TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Advi-*  
14                   *sory Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, in-*  
15                   *cluding per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates au-*  
16                   *thorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I*  
17                   *of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while*  
18                   *away from their homes or regular places of business*  
19                   *in the performance of services for the Advisory Com-*  
20                   *mittee.*

21                   (3) *RESOURCES.—The Secretary shall ensure*  
22                   *that such personnel, funding, and other resources are*  
23                   *made available to the Advisory Committee as the Sec-*  
24                   *retary determines appropriate to carry out the duties*  
25                   *of the Advisory Committee.*

1           (4) *INFORMATION.*—*The Secretary shall furnish*  
2           *to the Advisory Committee such information as the*  
3           *Advisory Committee may request from the Secretary,*  
4           *subject to applicable provisions of law.*

5           (h) *TERMINATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.*—*The*  
6           *Advisory Committee shall terminate on the date that is 10*  
7           *years after the date of the enactment of this Act.*

8           **SEC. 3. ABOLITION OF INACTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

9           *Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment*  
10          *of this Act and before establishing the Veterans Advisory*  
11          *Committee on Equal Access under section 2, the Secretary*  
12          *of Veterans Affairs shall—*

13                 (1) *abolish an advisory committee of the Depart-*  
14                 *ment of Veterans Affairs that—*

15                         (A) *was not established by an Act of Con-*  
16                         *gress; and*

17                         (B) *is inactive;*

18                 (2) *consolidate two advisory committees de-*  
19                 *scribed in paragraph (1); or*

20                 (3) *submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-*  
21                 *airs of the Senate and House of Representatives a*  
22                 *recommendation to abolish an advisory committee of*  
23                 *the Department that—*

24                         (A) *was established by an Act of Congress;*  
25                         *and*

1                    *(B) is inactive.*

2    **SEC. 4. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.**

3            *The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38,*  
4    *United States Code, is amended by striking “November 15,*  
5    *2031” each place it appears and inserting “November 29,*  
6    *2031”.*

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118<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

**H. R. 7342**

[Report No. 118-676]

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## **A BILL**

To establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on  
Equal Access, and for other purposes.

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SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

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mittee of the Whole House on the State of the Union,  
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