

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9525

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.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

Mr. LUTTRELL (for himself, Mr. MCGARVEY, Mr. HUNT, Mr. CISCOMANI, and Mr. VAN ORDEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

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.

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”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PRO-**
2 **GRAM TO AWARD GRANTS FOR THE PROVI-**
3 **SION OF SERVICE DOGS TO VETERANS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—

5 (1) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—Not later
6 than 24 months after the date of the enactment of
7 this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall es-
8 tablish a pilot program under which the Secretary
9 shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to non-
10 profit entities to provide service dogs to eligible vet-
11 erans.

12 (2) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out
13 the pilot program during the five-year period begin-
14 ning on the date on which the first grant is awarded
15 under this section.

16 (b) APPLICATIONS.—

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

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

24 (A) A proposal for the provision of service
25 dogs to eligible veterans, including how the non-
26 profit entity will communicate with the Sec-

1 retary to ensure an increasing number of serv-
2 ice dogs are provided to veterans.

3 (B) A description of the following:

4 (i) The training that will be provided
5 by the nonprofit entity to eligible veterans.

6 (ii) The training of dogs that will
7 serve as service dogs.

8 (iii) Any additional support or services
9 the nonprofit entity will provide for such
10 dogs and eligible veterans.

11 (iv) The plan for publicizing the avail-
12 ability of such dogs through a marketing
13 campaign that targets eligible veterans.

14 (v) The commitment of the nonprofit
15 entity to have humane standards for ani-
16 mals.

17 (C) Documentation certifying that the non-
18 profit entity is accredited by Assistance Dogs
19 International or the International Guide Dog
20 Federation.

21 (c) AWARD OF GRANTS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award a
23 grant to each nonprofit entity for which the Sec-
24 retary has approved an application submitted under
25 subsection (b)(1).

1 (2) AGREEMENT REQUIRED.—Before the provi-
2 sion of any grant amounts to a nonprofit entity se-
3 lected to receive a grant under this section, the Sec-
4 retary shall enter into an agreement, containing
5 such terms, conditions, and limitations as the Sec-
6 retary determines appropriate, with such entity.

7 (3) GRANT AMOUNTS AND INTERVALS OF PAY-
8 MENT.—The Secretary—

9 (A) may establish a maximum amount to
10 be awarded to each nonprofit entity each fiscal
11 year under this section; and

12 (B) shall establish intervals of payment for
13 the administration of each grant awarded under
14 this section.

15 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—A recipient of a grant under
17 this section shall use the grant amounts to plan, de-
18 velop, implement, or manage (or any combination
19 thereof) one or more programs that provide service
20 dogs to eligible veterans.

21 (2) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Sec-
22 retary may establish a maximum amount for each
23 grant awarded under this section that may be used
24 by the recipient of the grant to cover administrative
25 expenses.

1 (3) OTHER CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS.—

2 The Secretary may establish other conditions or lim-
3 itations on the use of grant amounts under this sec-
4 tion.

5 (e) REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS.—

6 (1) NOTIFICATIONS AND INFORMATION.—A re-
7 cipient of a grant under this section shall—

8 (A) notify each veteran who receives a
9 service dog through such grant that the service
10 dog is being paid for, in whole or in part, by
11 the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

12 (B) inform each such veteran of the bene-
13 fits and services available from the Secretary
14 for the veteran and the service dog.

15 (2) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN FEES.—A recipi-
16 ent of a grant under this section may not charge a
17 fee to a veteran receiving a service dog through such
18 grant.

19 (f) PROCESS FOR VETERANS WITH MENTAL
20 HEALTH CONDITIONS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—A veteran with a mental
22 health condition seeking a service dog from a recipi-
23 ent of a grant under this section shall meet with a
24 mental health provider of the Department.

1 (2) EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION; RE-
2 QUEST.—The mental health provider and the care
3 team of a veteran described in paragraph (1) shall—

4 (A) evaluate the veteran and determine—

5 (i) whether the veteran has substan-
6 tial mobility limitations;

7 (ii) whether the mental health condi-
8 tion of the veteran is the primary cause of
9 such limitations; and

10 (iii) whether a service dog would be
11 the optimal intervention or treatment ap-
12 proach for the veteran; and

13 (B) if the mental health provider and the
14 care team determine that a service dog would
15 be the optimal intervention or treatment ap-
16 proach for the veteran, request a service dog
17 from a recipient of a grant under this section
18 on behalf of the veteran through coordination
19 with the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service of
20 the medical center of the Department local to
21 the veteran.

22 (g) VETERINARY INSURANCE.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide
24 to each veteran who receives a service dog through

1 a grant under this section a commercially available
2 veterinary insurance policy for the service dog.

3 (2) CONTINUATION.—If the Secretary provides
4 a veterinary insurance policy to a veteran under
5 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall continue to pro-
6 vide the policy to the veteran without regard to the
7 continuation or termination of the pilot program.

8 (h) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The
9 Secretary may provide training and technical assistance
10 to recipients of grants under this section.

11 (i) OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary—

13 (A) shall establish such oversight and mon-
14 itoring requirements as the Secretary deter-
15 mines appropriate to ensure that grant amounts
16 awarded under this section are used appro-
17 priately; and

18 (B) may take such actions as the Secretary
19 determines necessary to address any issues
20 identified through the enforcement of such re-
21 quirements.

22 (2) REPORTS AND ANSWERS.—The Secretary
23 may require each recipient of a grant under this sec-
24 tion to provide, in such form as may be prescribed
25 by the Secretary, such reports or answers in writing

1 to specific questions, surveys, or questionnaires as
2 the Secretary determines necessary to carry out the
3 pilot program.

4 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 (1) ELIGIBLE VETERAN.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “eligible vet-
7 eran” means a veteran who—

8 (i) is enrolled in the system of annual
9 patient enrollment of the Department es-
10 tablished and operated under subsection
11 (a) of section 1705 of title 38, United
12 States Code, or is otherwise entitled to
13 hospital care and medical services under
14 subsection (c)(2) of such section; and

15 (ii) has one or more disabilities, condi-
16 tions, or diagnoses described in subpara-
17 graph (B).

18 (B) DISABILITY, CONDITION, DIAGNOSIS
19 DESCRIBED.—A disability, condition, or diag-
20 nosis described in this subparagraph is any of
21 the following:

22 (i) Blindness or visual impairment.

23 (ii) Loss of use of a limb, paralysis, or
24 other significant mobility issue, including
25 mental health mobility.

1 (iii) Loss of hearing.

2 (iv) Post-traumatic stress disorder.

3 (v) Traumatic brain injury.

4 (vi) Any other disability, condition, or
5 diagnosis for which the Secretary deter-
6 mines, based on medical judgment, that it
7 is optimal for the veteran to manage the
8 disability, condition, or diagnosis and live
9 independently through the assistance of a
10 service dog.

11 (2) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term “pilot pro-
12 gram” means the pilot program required by sub-
13 section (a)(1).

14 (3) SERVICE DOG.—The term “service dog”
15 means any dog that is individually trained to do
16 work or perform tasks that are—

17 (A) for the benefit of a veteran with a dis-
18 ability, condition, or diagnosis described in
19 paragraph (1)(B); and

20 (B) directly related to the disability, condi-
21 tion, or diagnosis of the veteran.

22 (k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
24 \$10,000,000 for each of the five consecutive fiscal years

- 1 following the fiscal year in which the pilot program is es-
- 2 tablished under subsection (a).

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