

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4309

To require the Secretary of Defense to conduct an evaluation of relocation assistance programs available to members of the Armed Forces.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 9, 2024

Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. OSSOFF) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Defense to conduct an evaluation of relocation assistance programs available to members of the Armed Forces.

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 “Relocation Assistance
5 for Military Families Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. EVALUATION OF RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PRO-**
7 **GRAMS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall
9 conduct an in-depth evaluation of relocation assistance
10 programs carried out under section 1056 of title 10,

1 United States Code, and the use of such programs by
2 members of the Armed Forces.

3 (b) ELEMENTS.—The evaluation required by sub-
4 section (a) shall include the following:

5 (1) An analysis of whether the relocation assist-
6 ance programs offered by the Department of De-
7 fense as of the date of the enactment of this Act—

8 (A) conform to the requirements for such
9 programs under section 1056 of title 10, United
10 States Code; and

11 (B) meet the needs of members of the
12 Armed Forces.

13 (2) An identification of the relocation assistance
14 programs most frequently used by members, includ-
15 ing an identification of the key factors that con-
16 tribute to such usage.

17 (3) An identification of—

18 (A) specific barriers faced by members in
19 accessing effective relocation assistance; and

20 (B) strategies to mitigate those barriers.

21 (4) An identification of a representative sample
22 of military installations located in high-cost areas
23 and, with respect to such installations, an assess-
24 ment of the following:

1 (A) The success of relocation assistance
2 programs at such installations.

3 (B) Partnerships between such installa-
4 tions and local communities aimed at helping
5 alleviate financial burdens for members, specifi-
6 cally related to housing.

7 (C) Housing supply for members, both ac-
8 companied and unaccompanied by dependents,
9 comparing supply with total need.

10 (5) An analysis of the support mechanisms
11 available as of the date of the enactment of this Act
12 for military families facing significant financial bur-
13 dens as a result of permanent changes of station to
14 high-cost areas.

15 (c) CONSULTATIONS.—In conducting the evaluation
16 required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with
17 the following:

18 (1) Military family support organizations.

19 (2) Members of the Armed Forces who have re-
20 cently undergone permanent changes of station, both
21 accompanied and unaccompanied by dependents.

22 (3) Members who have used relocation assist-
23 ance services, with a focus on those who have moved
24 to or from high-cost areas.

25 (4) Commanders of military installations.

1 (5) A selection of State and local officials that
2 represent areas in the vicinity of military installa-
3 tions.

4 (6) The Office of Local Defense Community
5 Cooperation of the Department of Defense.

6 (7) Housing and urban development experts
7 with expertise in accommodations in high-cost areas.

8 (8) Such other individuals or organizations as
9 the Secretary considers appropriate.

10 (d) BEST PRACTICES GUIDE.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
12 after the completion of the evaluation required by
13 subsection (a), the Secretary of Defense, in coordi-
14 nation with the Secretaries of the military depart-
15 ments, shall publish a best practices guide to be
16 used by the leadership of military installations and
17 by local communities to assist members of the
18 Armed Forces with accessing relocation assistance
19 programs.

20 (2) ELEMENTS.—The best practices guide re-
21 quired by paragraph (1) shall address access to relo-
22 cation assistance programs determined, pursuant to
23 the evaluation conducted under subsection (a), to be
24 successful in assisting members who make perma-
25 nent changes of station to high-cost areas. Such pro-

1 grams shall include programs offered both through
2 the Department of Defense and through local com-
3 munities.

4 (e) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
6 of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense com-
7 mittees (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United
8 States Code) a report that includes the following:

9 (1) Detailed findings from the evaluation con-
10 ducted under subsection (a).

11 (2) The best practices guide required by sub-
12 section (d), not later than 30 days before publication
13 of the guide.

14 (3) Recommendations for legislative or policy
15 changes to relocation assistance programs to better
16 fulfill the objectives of section 1056 of title 10,
17 United States Code.

18 (4) A roadmap, including projected timelines
19 and resources required, for—

20 (A) implementation and integration of the
21 best practices set forth in the guide; and

22 (B) addressing the needs of members of
23 the Armed Forces making permanent changes
24 of station to high-cost areas.

1 (f) REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES GUIDE IMPLEMEN-
2 TATION.—Not later than 3 years after the best practices
3 guide required by subsection (d) is published, the Comp-
4 troller General of the United States shall review the imple-
5 mentation of the guide, relocation assistance programs,
6 and other resources provided to members of the Armed
7 Forces to assist such members with permanent changes
8 of station, specifically focusing on high-cost areas.

9 (g) HIGH-COST AREA DEFINED.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—In this section, the term
11 “high-cost area” shall have the meaning determined
12 by the Secretary of Defense in regulations prescribed
13 in accordance with paragraph (2).

14 (2) REGULATIONS.—In prescribing regulations
15 defining the term “high-cost area” for purposes of
16 this section, the Secretary shall—

17 (A) solicit and incorporate feedback
18 from—

19 (i) appropriate officials of the General
20 Services Administration who work on rel-
21 evant matters; and

22 (ii) individuals and entities described
23 in subsection (c); and

24 (B) consider relevant factors from across
25 various Federal agencies that may indicate

1 areas that are high cost, such as the non-stand-
2 ard per diem rates of the General Services Ad-
3 ministration.

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