

103^D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1503

To expand services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 30 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 27), 1993

Mr. WELLSTONE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To expand services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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 PTSD Treat-
5 ment and Psychological Readjustment Act of 1993”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds—

8 (1) that a study carried out pursuant to the
9 Veterans’ Health Care Amendments of 1983 (Public
10 Law 98–160; 97 Stat. 993) on the readjustment of

1 Vietnam-era veterans estimated that approximately
2 479,000 Vietnam-theater veterans currently suffer
3 from full-blown post-traumatic stress disorder
4 (PTSD);

5 (2) that such study found that during the final
6 year in which such study was conducted only 10 per-
7 cent of the Vietnam-era veterans suffering from
8 post-traumatic stress disorder were provided services
9 by the Department of Veterans Affairs for post-trau-
10 matic stress disorder;

11 (3) that the conflict in the Persian Gulf re-
12 sulted in an increased demand for services provided
13 by the Department of Veterans Affairs for post-trau-
14 matic stress disorder;

15 (4) that expansion of the current programs of
16 the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide serv-
17 ices to veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress
18 disorder (including specialized inpatient PTSD
19 units, PTSD clinical teams, readjustment centers,
20 and other services) would be an effective means of
21 reaching those veterans who have not previously
22 been provided such services; and

23 (5) that implementing the recommendations of
24 the Special Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress
25 Disorder would be an effective means of reaching

1 veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress dis-
2 order who have not been provided services.

3 **SEC. 3. EXPANSION OF THE SPECIALIZED INPATIENT POST-**
4 **TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER UNIT PRO-**
5 **GRAM.**

6 (a) POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the Secretary
7 of Veterans Affairs to implement the recommendations of
8 the Special Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
9 with respect to the program of the Department of Veter-
10 ans Affairs to establish and operate specialized inpatient
11 post-traumatic stress disorder units (SIPUs) at Depart-
12 ment medical centers. In operating such units, the Sec-
13 retary shall ensure that the facilities and services of such
14 units are available to all eligible veterans, including veter-
15 ans of the Persian Gulf conflict.

16 (b) INCREASE IN NUMBER OF SIPUs.—The Sec-
17 retary shall increase the number of specialized inpatient
18 post-traumatic stress disorder units existing on the date
19 of the enactment of this Act by not less than 30. Of such
20 number—

21 (1) not less than five such units shall be estab-
22 lished by December 31, 1994;

23 (2) not less than a total of 15 such units shall
24 be established by December 31, 1995;

1 (3) not less than a total of 25 such units shall
2 be established by December 31, 1996; and

3 (4) not less than a total of 30 such units shall
4 be established by December 31, 1997.

5 **SEC. 4. EXPANSION OF THE VET CENTER PROGRAM AND**
6 **OUTREACH EFFORTS FOR VETERANS WITH**
7 **READJUSTMENT COUNSELING NEEDS.**

8 (a) SPECIAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.—(1)
9 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the
10 Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veter-
11 ans Affairs, shall direct the Special Committee on Post-
12 Traumatic Stress Disorder to identify areas of the country
13 in which there are significant needs for expanding the Vet
14 Center program, especially areas in which there are rel-
15 atively high numbers of veterans who are members of mi-
16 nority groups and areas that are currently not well-served
17 by Vet Centers.

18 (2) The Special Committee, based on its findings
19 under paragraph (1), shall present a list of not less than
20 40 areas as candidates for new Vet Centers to the Read-
21 justment Counseling Service of the Department of Veter-
22 ans Affairs not later than September 30, 1994.

23 (b) VET CENTER PROGRAM EXPANSION.—Based on
24 the requirements identified pursuant to subsection (a), the
25 Readjustment Counseling Service shall increase the num-

1 ber of Vet Centers existing on the date of the enactment
2 of this Act by not less than 40. Of such number—

3 (1) not less than five such centers shall be es-
4 tablished by December 31, 1994;

5 (2) not less than a total of 20 such centers
6 shall be established by December 31, 1995;

7 (3) not less than a total of 30 such centers
8 shall be established by December 31, 1996; and

9 (4) not less than a total of 40 such centers
10 shall be established by December 31, 1997.

11 (c) OUTREACH RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Advisory
12 Committee on Veteran Readjustment Counseling shall
13 prepare a report on recommendations to increase outreach
14 efforts to veterans of the Vietnam-era and periods after
15 the Vietnam-era who have readjustment counseling needs.
16 The Advisory Committee shall submit such report to the
17 Secretary not later than July 29, 1994. Not later than
18 60 days after receiving such report, the Secretary shall
19 transmit a copy of the report, together with the Sec-
20 retary's comments and recommendations, to Congress.

1 **SEC. 5. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR READJUSTMENT**
2 **COUNSELING AND CERTAIN RELATED COUN-**
3 **SELING SERVICES.**

4 (a) READJUSTMENT COUNSELING.—(1) Subsection
5 (a) of section 1712A of title 38, United States Code, is
6 amended to read as follows:

7 “(a)(1) Upon the request of any veteran who while
8 in the active military, naval, or air service served in a com-
9 bat theater of operations (as defined by the Secretary of
10 Defense), the Secretary shall furnish counseling to such
11 veteran to assist such veteran in readjusting to civilian
12 life. Upon the request of any veteran other than a veteran
13 described in the preceding sentence, the Secretary shall,
14 within the limits of Department facilities, furnish counsel-
15 ing to such veteran to assist such veteran in readjusting
16 to civilian life.

17 “(2) Such counseling shall include a general mental
18 and psychological assessment to ascertain whether such
19 veteran has mental or psychological problems associated
20 with readjustment to civilian life.”.

21 (2) Subsection (c) of such section is repealed.

22 (b) OTHER COUNSELING.—Such section is further
23 amended by inserting after subsection (b) the following
24 new subsection (c):

25 “(c)(1) The Secretary may provide the counseling
26 services described in section 1701(6)(B)(ii) of this title to

1 the surviving parents, spouse, and children of any member
 2 of the Armed Forces who dies while serving on active duty
 3 or from a condition (as determined by the Secretary) in-
 4 curred in or aggravated by such service.

5 “(2) The Secretary may make the facilities and serv-
 6 ices of Vet Centers available to provide appropriate coun-
 7 seling and other services to family members of any mem-
 8 ber of the Armed Forces who is receiving combat pay.”.

9 (c) AUTHORITY TO CONTRACT FOR COUNSELING
 10 SERVICES.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended by
 11 striking out “subsections (a) and (b)” each place it ap-
 12 pears and inserting in lieu thereof “subsections (a), (b),
 13 and (c)”.

14 **SEC. 6. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE READJUSTMENT OF**
 15 **VETERANS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—(1) Subchapter II of chapter 17
 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting
 18 after section 1712B the following:

19 **“§1712C. Advisory Committee on Veteran-Readjust-**
 20 **ment Counseling**

21 “(a)(1) There is in the Department the Advisory
 22 Committee on Veteran Readjustment Counseling (herein-
 23 after in this section referred to as the ‘Committee’).

24 “(2) The Committee shall consist of 18 members.
 25 The members of the Committee shall be appointed by the

1 Secretary and shall include individuals who are recognized
2 authorities in fields pertinent to the social, psychological,
3 economic, or educational readjustment of veterans. An of-
4 ficer or employee of the United States may not be ap-
5 pointed as a member of the Committee. At least 12 mem-
6 bers of the Committee shall be veterans of the Vietnam
7 era or other period of war. Appointments of members of
8 the Committee shall be made from among individuals who
9 have experience with the provision of veterans benefits and
10 services by the Department or who are otherwise familiar
11 with programs of the Department.

12 “(3) The Secretary shall seek to ensure that members
13 appointed to the Committee include persons from a wide
14 variety of geographic areas and ethnic backgrounds, per-
15 sons from veterans service organizations, minorities, and
16 women.

17 “(4) The Secretary shall determine the terms of serv-
18 ice and pay and allowances of the members of the Commit-
19 tee, except that a term of service may not exceed two
20 years. The Secretary may reappoint any member for addi-
21 tional terms of service.

22 “(b)(1) The Secretary shall, on a regular basis, con-
23 sult with and seek the advice of the Committee with re-
24 spect to the provision by the Department of benefits and

1 services to veterans in order to assist veterans in the read-
2 justment to civilian life.

3 “(2)(A) In providing advice to the Secretary under
4 this subsection, the Committee shall—

5 “(i) assemble and review information relating to
6 the needs of veterans in readjusting to civilian life;

7 “(ii) provide information relating to the nature
8 and character of psychological problems arising from
9 military service;

10 “(iii) provide an on-going assessment of the ef-
11 fectiveness of the policies, organizational structures,
12 and services of the Department in assisting veterans
13 in readjusting to civilian life; and

14 “(iv) provide on-going advice on the most ap-
15 propriate means of responding to the readjustment
16 needs of future veterans.

17 “(B) In carrying out its duties under subparagraph
18 (A), the Committee shall take into special account veter-
19 ans of the Vietnam era, and the readjustment needs of
20 such veterans.

21 “(c)(1) Not later than March 31 of each year, the
22 Committee shall submit to the Secretary a report on the
23 programs and activities of the Department that relate to
24 the readjustment of veterans to civilian life. Each such
25 report shall include—

1 “(A) an assessment of the needs of veterans
2 with respect to readjustment to civilian life;

3 “(B) a review of the programs and activities of
4 the Department designed to meet such needs; and

5 “(C) such recommendations (including rec-
6 ommendations for administrative and legislative ac-
7 tion) as the Committee considers appropriate.

8 “(2) Not later than 90 days after the receipt of each
9 report under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall transmit
10 to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and
11 House of Representatives a copy of the report, together
12 with any comments and recommendations concerning the
13 report that the Secretary considers appropriate.

14 “(3) The Committee may also submit to the Sec-
15 retary such other reports and recommendations as the
16 Committee considers appropriate.

17 “(4) The Secretary shall submit with each annual re-
18 port submitted to the Congress pursuant to section 529
19 of this title a summary of all reports and recommendations
20 of the Committee submitted to the Secretary since the pre-
21 vious annual report of the Secretary submitted pursuant
22 to that section.

23 “(d)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the pro-
24 visions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C.

1 App.) shall apply to the activities of the Committee under
2 this section.

3 “(2) Section 14 of such Act shall not apply to the
4 Committee.”.

5 (2) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter
6 17 of such title is amended by inserting after the item
7 relating to section 1712B the following:

“1712C. Advisory Committee on Veteran Readjustment Counseling.”.

8 (b) ORIGINAL MEMBERS.—(1) Notwithstanding sub-
9 section (a)(2) of section 1712C of title 38, United States
10 Code (as added by subsection (a)), the members of the
11 Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Vietnam and
12 Other War Veterans on the date of the enactment of this
13 Act shall be the original members of the advisory commit-
14 tee established under that section.

15 (2) The original members shall so serve until the Sec-
16 retary of Veterans Affairs carries out appointments under
17 such subsection (a)(2). The Secretary shall carry out such
18 appointments as soon as is practicable. The Secretary may
19 make such appointments from among such original mem-
20 bers.

21 **SEC. 7. PILOT PROGRAM FOR TREATMENT OF POST-TRAU-**
22 **MATIC STRESS DISORDER.**

23 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—(1) Subchapter
24 II of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amend-
25 ed by adding at the end the following:

1 **“§ 1720E. Treatment and rehabilitation for post-trau-**
2 **matic stress disorder; pilot program**

3 “(a)(1) The Secretary, in furnishing hospital, nursing
4 home, and domiciliary care and medical and rehabilitative
5 services under this chapter, shall conduct a pilot program
6 under which the Secretary may contract for care and
7 treatment and rehabilitative services in halfway houses,
8 therapeutic communities, psychiatric residential treatment
9 centers, and other community based treatment facilities,
10 for eligible veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress
11 disorder. Such pilot program shall be planned, designed,
12 and conducted by the Under Secretary for Health, with
13 the approval of the Secretary, so as to demonstrate any
14 medical advantages and cost effectiveness that may result
15 from furnishing such care and services to veterans with
16 post-traumatic stress disorder in contract facilities as au-
17 thorized by this section, rather than in facilities over which
18 the Secretary has direct jurisdiction.

19 “(2) Before furnishing such care and services to a
20 veteran through a contract facility as authorized by para-
21 graph (1), the Secretary shall approve (in accordance with
22 criteria which the Secretary shall prescribe by regulation)
23 the quality and effectiveness of the program operated by
24 such facility for the purpose for which such veteran is to
25 be furnished such care and services.

1 “(b) The Secretary, in consultation with the Sec-
2 retary of Labor and the Director of the Office of Person-
3 nel Management, shall take appropriate steps to—

4 “(1) urge all Federal agencies and appropriate
5 private and public firms, organizations, agencies,
6 and persons to provide appropriate employment and
7 training opportunities for veterans who have been
8 provided treatment and rehabilitative services under
9 this title for post-traumatic stress disorder and have
10 been determined by competent medical authority to
11 be sufficiently rehabilitated to be employable; and

12 “(2) provide all possible assistance to the Sec-
13 retary of Labor in providing such veterans with such
14 employment and training opportunities.

15 “(c) Upon receipt of an application for treatment and
16 rehabilitative services under this title for post-traumatic
17 stress disorder from any individual who has been dis-
18 charged or released from active military, naval, or air serv-
19 ice but who is not eligible for such treatment and services,
20 the Secretary shall—

21 “(1) provide referral services to assist such in-
22 dividual, to the maximum extent practicable, in ob-
23 taining treatment and rehabilitative services from
24 sources outside the Department; and

1 “(2) if pertinent, advise such individual of such
2 individual’s rights to apply to the appropriate mili-
3 tary, naval, or air service and the Department for
4 review of such individual’s discharge or release from
5 such service.

6 “(d) The capacity of the pilot program under sub-
7 section (a) shall be maintained at 500 eligible individuals.

8 “(e) The Secretary may not furnish care and treat-
9 ment and rehabilitative services under subsection (a) after
10 the last day of the fifth fiscal year following the fiscal year
11 during which the pilot program authorized by that sub-
12 section is begun.

13 “(f) Not later than March 31, 1998, the Secretary
14 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of
15 the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the
16 findings and recommendations of the Secretary pertaining
17 to the operation through September 30, 1997, of the pilot
18 program authorized by subsection (a).

19 “(g) The authority of the Secretary to enter into con-
20 tracts under this section shall be effective for any fiscal
21 year only to such extent or in such amounts as are pro-
22 vided in appropriation Acts.”.

23 (2) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter
24 17 of such title is amended by inserting after the item
25 relating to section 1720D the following:

“1720E. Treatment and rehabilitation for post-traumatic stress disorder; pilot program.”.

1 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Secretary of Veterans
2 Affairs may not furnish care and treatment and rehabilita-
3 tion services under subsection (a) of section 1720E of title
4 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), before
5 October 1, 1993.

6 **SEC. 8. REPORT ON POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**
7 **CONTRACT CARE.**

8 (a) EXAMINATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.—The Special
9 Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, in con-
10 sultation with the Advisory Committee on Veterans Read-
11 justment Counseling, shall examine the effectiveness of
12 contracts for the treatment of post-traumatic stress dis-
13 order with private facilities and therapists under section
14 1712A(e) of title 38, United States Code.

15 (b) REPORT.—Not later than December 31, 1994,
16 the Special Committee shall submit to the Committees on
17 Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representa-
18 tives a report of its findings and recommendations per-
19 taining to—

20 (1) establishing stable funding for post-trau-
21 matic stress disorder contract care, and

22 (2) the availability of post-traumatic stress dis-
23 order contract care for eligible individuals in rural
24 areas and such individuals who are not currently

1 well-served by other Department of Veterans Affairs
2 medical services.

3 **SEC. 9. USE OF SCHOLARSHIP AND TUITION REIMBURSE-**
4 **MENT PROGRAMS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PRO-**
5 **FESSIONALS.**

6 In administering the Health Professionals Edu-
7 cational Assistance Program under chapter 76 of title 38,
8 United States Code, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
9 shall seek to encourage the participation of individuals in
10 the program who desire to become psychologists, psychia-
11 trists, social workers, psychiatric nurses, and other profes-
12 sionals specializing in the treatment of post-traumatic
13 stress disorder. The Secretary shall designate, pursuant
14 to section 7612(b)(3) of that title, additional fields of edu-
15 cation or training that may be beneficial for the treatment
16 of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

17 **SEC. 10. POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER RESEARCH**
18 **PROGRAMS.**

19 (a) INTERMODAL APPROACH.—The Under Secretary
20 for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall
21 conduct a research program to consider the most effective
22 treatment modalities for the treatment of post-traumatic
23 stress disorder. The research program shall be conducted
24 at at least one specialized inpatient post-traumatic stress
25 disorder unit (SIPU), at least one post-traumatic stress

1 disorder clinical team (PCT), and at least one veterans
2 readjustment center, as designated by the Under Sec-
3 retary. The Under Secretary shall report the findings of
4 such program to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of
5 the Senate and House of Representatives not later than
6 December 31, 1997.

7 (b) INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILY MEMBERS.—The
8 Under Secretary shall conduct a research program con-
9 cerning the effectiveness of involving the family in the
10 treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder. The Under
11 Secretary shall report the findings of such program to the
12 Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House
13 of Representatives not later than December 31, 1996.

14 (c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Under Secretary shall
15 carry out subsections (a) and (b) through the National
16 Center on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

17 (d) ADVICE.—The Under Secretary shall carry out
18 subsections (a) and (b) in consultation with the Special
19 Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the
20 Advisory Committee on Veterans Readjustment Counsel-
21 ing.

22 **SEC. 11. EXPANSION OF THE POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DIS-**
23 **ORDER CLINICAL TEAM PROGRAM.**

24 (a) POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the Secretary
25 of Veterans Affairs to implement the recommendations of

1 the Special Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
2 to establish and operate post-traumatic stress disorder
3 clinical teams (PCTs) at Department medical centers
4 which provide mental health services. In operating such
5 teams, the Secretary shall ensure that the services of such
6 teams are available to all eligible veterans.

7 (b) INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PCTs.—The Secretary
8 shall increase the number of clinical teams existing on the
9 date of the enactment of this Act by not less than 50.
10 Of such number—

11 (1) not less than 15 such units shall be estab-
12 lished by December 31, 1994;

13 (2) not less than a total of 30 such units shall
14 be established by December 31, 1995;

15 (3) not less than a total of 40 such units shall
16 be established by December 31, 1996; and

17 (4) not less than a total of 50 such units shall
18 be established by December 31, 1997.

19 (c) LOCATIONS OF NEW PCTs.—In establishing new
20 post-traumatic stress disorder clinical teams pursuant to
21 subsection (a), the Secretary shall first locate teams at
22 medical centers that do not have a specialized inpatient
23 post-traumatic stress disorder unit (SIPU) and do not
24 have an affiliated Vet Center.

1 **SEC. 12. DEFINITIONS.**

2 For the purposes of this Act—

3 (1) The term “Special Committee on Post-
4 Traumatic Stress Disorder” means the Special Com-
5 mittee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder estab-
6 lished by the Under Secretary for Health pursuant
7 to section 110 of the veterans Health Care Act of
8 1984 (38 U.S.C. 1712A note).

9 (2) The term “Advisory Committee on Veteran
10 Readjustment Counseling” means the Advisory Com-
11 mittee on Veteran Readjustment Counseling estab-
12 lished under section 1712C of title 38, United States
13 Code (as added by section 6(a)).

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