

Calendar No. 290109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION**S. 716****[Report No. 109-180]**

To amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance services provided by vet centers, to clarify and improve the provision of bereavement counseling by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 6, 2005

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Mr. CONRAD) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

NOVEMBER 16, 2005

Reported by Mr. CRAIG, without amendment

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance services provided by vet centers, to clarify and improve the provision of bereavement counseling by the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Vet Center Enhance-
3 ment Act of 2005”.

4 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES OF VET CEN-
5 TERS.**

6 (a) **ADDITIONAL OUTREACH WORKERS.**—The Sec-
7 retary of Veterans Affairs shall employ not more than 50
8 veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation
9 Iraqi Freedom for the purpose of providing outreach to
10 veterans on the availability of readjustment counseling
11 and related mental health services for veterans under sec-
12 tion 1712A of title 38, United States Code.

13 (b) **CONSTRUCTION WITH CURRENT OUTREACH
14 PROGRAM.**—The veterans employed under subsection (a)
15 are in addition to any veterans employed by the Secretary
16 for the purpose described in that subsection under the
17 February 2004 program of the Department of Veterans
18 Affairs to provide outreach described in that subsection.

19 (c) **ASSIGNMENT TO VET CENTERS.**—The Secretary
20 may assign any veteran employed under subsection (a) to
21 any vet center that the Secretary considers appropriate
22 in order to meet the purpose described in that subsection.

23 (d) **INAPPLICABILITY AND TERMINATION OF LIMITA-
24 TION ON DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT.**—Any limitation on
25 the duration of employment of veterans under the program
26 described in subsection (b) is hereby terminated, and shall

1 not apply to veterans employed under such program or
2 under this section.

3 (e) EMPLOYMENT STATUS.—Veterans employed
4 under subsection (a) shall be employed in career condi-
5 tional status, which is the employment status in which vet-
6 erans are employed under the program described in sub-
7 section (b).

8 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) VET CENTER.—The term “vet center”
10 means a center for the provision of readjustment
11 counseling and related mental health services under
12 section 1712A of title 38, United States Code.

13 (2) VETERAN OF OPERATION ENDURING FREE-
14 DOM OR OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.—The term
15 “veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom or Oper-
16 ation Iraqi Freedom” means any veteran who served
17 in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during
18 Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi
19 Freedom.

20 **SEC. 3. CLARIFICATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF BEREAVE-**
21 **MENT COUNSELING.**

22 (a) CLARIFICATION OF MEMBERS OF IMMEDIATE
23 FAMILY ELIGIBLE FOR COUNSELING.—Subsection (b) of
24 section 1783 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

1 (1) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

2 and

3 (2) by adding at the end the following new
4 paragraph:

5 “(2) For purposes of this subsection, the members
6 of the immediate family of a member of the Armed Forces
7 described in paragraph (1) include the parents of such
8 member.”.

9 (b) PROVISION OF COUNSELING THROUGH VET CEN-
10 TERS.—Such section is further amended—

11 (1) by redesignating subsection (c) as sub-
12 section (d); and

13 (2) by inserting after subsection (b) the fol-
14 lowing new subsection (c):

15 “(c) PROVISION OF COUNSELING THROUGH VET
16 CENTERS.—Bereavement counseling may be provided
17 under this section through the facilities and personnel of
18 centers for the provision of readjustment counseling and
19 related mental health services under section 1712A of this
20 title.”.

21 **SEC. 4. FUNDING FOR VET CENTER PROGRAM.**

22 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Depart-
23 ment of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2006,
24 \$180,000,000 for the provision of readjustment counseling
25 and related mental health services through centers under

1 section 1712A of title 38, United States Code, including
2 for the discharge of the requirements of this Act (and the
3 amendments made by this Act).

Calendar No. 290

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1ST Session

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