

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2796

To require a pilot program on the use of community-based organizations to ensure that veterans receive the care and benefits they need, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 2, 2008

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

A BILL

To require a pilot program on the use of community-based organizations to ensure that veterans receive the care and benefits they need, 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. PILOT PROGRAM ON USE OF COMMUNITY-**
4 **BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO ENSURE THAT**
5 **VETERANS RECEIVE NEEDED CARE AND BEN-**
6 **EFITS.**

7 (a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of
8 Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to assess
9 the feasibility and advisability of using community-based

1 organizations to ensure that veterans receive the care and
2 benefits that they need by using such organizations—

3 (1) to increase the coordination of providers of
4 health care and benefits for veterans to assist vet-
5 erans who are transitioning from military service to
6 civilian life in such transition;

7 (2) to increase the availability of high quality
8 medical and mental health services to veterans
9 transitioning from military service to civilian life;
10 and

11 (3) to provide assistance to families of veterans
12 who are transitioning from military service to civil-
13 ian life to help such families adjust to such veterans
14 in their transition.

15 (b) DURATION OF PROGRAM.—The pilot program
16 shall be carried out during the two-year period beginning
17 on the date of the enactment of this Act.

18 (c) PROGRAM LOCATIONS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The pilot program shall be
20 carried out at five Department of Veterans Affairs
21 medical centers selected by the Secretary for pur-
22 poses of the pilot program.

23 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting locations
24 for the pilot program, the Secretary shall consider

1 the advisability of selecting Department medical cen-
2 ters that are located in—

3 (A) rural areas; and

4 (B) areas with populations that have a
5 high proportion of minority groups and individ-
6 uals who have experienced significant dispari-
7 ties in their receipt of health care.

8 (d) GRANTS.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot
9 program through the award of grants to community-based
10 organizations.

11 (e) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—A commu-
12 nity-based organization seeking a grant under the pilot
13 program shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
14 an application therefor in such form and in such manner
15 as the Secretary considers appropriate.

16 (f) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—In using grant funds
17 for purposes of the pilot program, a community-based or-
18 ganization may use such funds for purposes as follows:

19 (1) To provide local telephone hotlines.

20 (2) To organize veterans for networking.

21 (3) To assist veterans in preparing applications
22 for benefits provided by the Department of Veterans
23 Affairs.

24 (4) To provide assistance to families of veterans
25 who are transitioning from military service to civil-

1 ian life to help such families adjust to such veterans
2 in their transition.

3 (5) To provide outreach for veterans and their
4 families to connect them with appropriate care and
5 benefit programs.

6 (6) To coordinate the efforts of providers of
7 health care and benefits for veterans in providing as-
8 sistance to veterans who are transitioning from mili-
9 tary service to civilian life.

10 (7) To carry out such other activities and pro-
11 vide such other services as may be appropriate for
12 purposes of the pilot program.

13 (g) REPORT ON PROGRAM.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
15 after the completion of the pilot program, the Sec-
16 retary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot
17 program.

18 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by para-
19 graph (1) shall include the following:

20 (A) The findings and conclusions of the
21 Secretary with respect to the pilot program.

22 (B) An assessment of the benefits to vet-
23 erans of the pilot program.

1 (C) The recommendations of the Secretary
2 as to the advisability of continuing the pilot
3 program.

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