

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 315

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 26, 2009

Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself and Mr. SANDERS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the outreach activities of 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Outreach Im-
5 provement Act of 2009”.

1 **SEC. 2. AUTHORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCE-**
2 **MENT OF OUTREACH OF ACTIVITIES DEPART-**
3 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 5 of title 38, United
5 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
6 lowing new subchapter:

7 “SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH

8 “§ 561. **Outreach activities: funding**

9 “(a) SEPARATE ACCOUNT FOR OUTREACH ACTIVI-
10 TIES.—The Secretary shall establish a separate account
11 for the funding of the outreach activities of the Depart-
12 ment, and shall establish within such account a separate
13 subaccount for the funding of the outreach activities of
14 each element of the Department specified in subsection
15 (c).

16 “(b) BUDGET REQUIREMENTS.—In the budget jus-
17 tification materials submitted to Congress in support of
18 the Department budget for any fiscal year (as submitted
19 with the budget of the President under section 1105(a)
20 of title 31), the Secretary shall include a separate state-
21 ment of the amount requested for such fiscal year for ac-
22 tivities as follows:

23 “(1) For outreach activities of the Department
24 in aggregate.

25 “(2) For outreach activities of each element of
26 the Department specified in subsection (c).

1 “(c) COVERED ELEMENTS.—The elements of the De-
2 partment specified in this subsection are as follows:

3 “(1) The Veterans Health Administration.

4 “(2) The Veterans Benefits Administration.

5 “(3) The National Cemetery Administration.

6 **“§ 562. Outreach activities: coordination of activities**
7 **within Department**

8 “(a) PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTIVE COORDINA-
9 TION.—The Secretary shall establish and maintain proce-
10 dures for ensuring the effective coordination of the out-
11 reach activities of the Department between and among the
12 following:

13 “(1) The Office of the Secretary.

14 “(2) The Office of Public Affairs.

15 “(3) The Veterans Health Administration.

16 “(4) The Veterans Benefits Administration.

17 “(5) The National Cemetery Administration.

18 “(b) REVIEW AND MODIFICATION.—The Secretary
19 shall—

20 “(1) periodically review the procedures main-
21 tained under subsection (a) for the purpose of ensur-
22 ing that such procedures meet the requirement in
23 that subsection; and

24 “(2) make such modifications to such proce-
25 dures as the Secretary considers appropriate in light

1 of such review in order to better achieve that pur-
2 pose.

3 **“§ 563. Grants to State and local governments and**
4 **nonprofit community-based organizations**
5 **for improvement of outreach**

6 “(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to
7 assist State and local governments and nonprofit commu-
8 nity-based organizations in carrying out programs that
9 offer a high probability of improving outreach and assist-
10 ance to veterans, and to the spouses, children, and parents
11 of veterans who may be eligible to receive veterans’ or vet-
12 erans’-related benefits, to ensure that such individuals are
13 fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any vet-
14 erans’ and veterans’-related benefits and programs (in-
15 cluding under State veterans’ programs).

16 “(b) GRANTS.—(1) The Secretary may award grants
17 to State and local governments and nonprofit community-
18 based organizations in order to achieve purposes as fol-
19 lows:

20 “(A) To carry out, coordinate, improve, or oth-
21 erwise enhance outreach.

22 “(B) To carry out, coordinate, improve, or oth-
23 erwise enhance activities to assist in the development
24 and submittal of claims for veterans’ and veterans’-
25 related benefits.

1 “(2) A veterans agency of a State receiving a grant
 2 under this subsection may use the grant amount for pur-
 3 poses described in paragraph (1) or award all or any por-
 4 tion of such grant amount to local governments in such
 5 State, other public entities in such State, or nonprofit
 6 community-based organizations in such State for such
 7 purposes.

8 “(c) FUNDING.—Amounts available for the Depart-
 9 ment for outreach in the account under section 561 of this
 10 title shall be available for activities under this section, in-
 11 cluding grants under subsection (b).”.

12 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 13 at the beginning of chapter 5 of such title is amended by
 14 adding at the end the following new items:

“SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH

“561. Outreach activities: funding.

“562. Outreach activities: coordination of activities within Department.

“563. Grants to State and local governments and community-based organiza-
 tions for improvement of outreach.”.

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