

**AMENDMENT TO
RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 117-33
OFFERED BY MR. LEVIN OF CALIFORNIA**

Add at the end of title VII the following new section:

1 **SEC. 7 ____ . AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AF-**
2 **FAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES TO IM-**
3 **PROVE OUTREACH TO VETERANS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United
5 States Code, is amended—

6 (1) by redesignating sections 6307 and 6308
7 and sections 6308 and 6309, respectively; and

8 (2) by inserting after section 6306 the following
9 new section 6307:

10 **“§ 6307. Grants to States to improve outreach to vet-**
11 **erans**

12 “(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to
13 provide for assistance by the Secretary to States to carry
14 out programs that—

15 “(1) improve outreach and assistance to vet-
16 erans and the spouses, children, and parents of vet-
17 erans, to ensure that such individuals are fully in-
18 formed about any veterans and veterans-related ben-

1 efits and programs (including State veterans pro-
2 grams) for which they may be eligible; and

3 “(2) facilitate opportunities for such individuals
4 to receive competent, qualified services in the prepa-
5 ration, presentation, and prosecution of veterans
6 benefits claims.

7 “(b) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may award grants
8 to States—

9 “(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or other-
10 wise enhance outreach activities;

11 “(2) to increase the number of county or tribal
12 veterans service officers serving in the State by hir-
13 ing new, additional such officers; or

14 “(3) to expand, carry out, coordinate, improve,
15 or otherwise enhance existing programs, activities,
16 and services of the State’s existing organization that
17 has been recognized by the Department of Veterans
18 Affairs pursuant to section 5902, in the preparation,
19 presentation, and prosecution of claims for veterans
20 benefits through representatives who hold positions
21 as county or Tribal veterans service officers.

22 “(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant
23 under this section, a State shall submit to the Secretary
24 an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and
25 containing such information as the Secretary may require.

1 “(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1)
2 shall include the following:

3 “(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

4 “(B) A description of the programs through
5 which the State will meet the outcome measures de-
6 veloped by the Secretary under subsection (i).

7 “(C) A description of how the State will dis-
8 tribute grant amounts equitably among counties (or
9 Tribal lands, as the case may be) with varying levels
10 of urbanization.

11 “(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to
12 meet the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska
13 Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans,
14 and veterans from other underserved communities.

15 “(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to en-
16 sure that grants awarded under this section are equitably
17 distributed among States with varying levels of urbaniza-
18 tion.

19 “(e) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize
20 awarding grants under this section that will serve the fol-
21 lowing areas:

22 “(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or
23 tribal veterans service officers.

24 “(2) Areas with high rates of—

25 “(A) suicide among veterans; or

1 “(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

2 “(f) USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERV-
3 ICE OFFICERS.—A State that receives a grant under this
4 section to carry out an activity described in subsection
5 (b)(1) shall carry out the activity through—

6 “(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer
7 of the State; or

8 “(2) if the State does not have a county or trib-
9 al veterans service officer, or if the county or Tribal
10 veterans service officers of the State cover only a
11 portion of that State, an appropriate entity of a
12 State, local, or Tribal government, or another pub-
13 licly funded entity, as determined by the Secretary.

14 “(g) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant awarded
15 under this section shall be used—

16 “(1) to expand existing programs, activities,
17 and services;

18 “(2) to hire and maintain new, additional coun-
19 ty or Tribal veterans service officers; or

20 “(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate
21 carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

22 “(h) OTHER PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—A grant
23 under this section may be used to provide education and
24 training, including on-the-job training, for State, county,
25 local, and tribal government employees who provide (or

1 when trained will provide) veterans outreach services in
2 order for those employees to obtain and maintain accredi-
3 tation in accordance with procedures approved by the Sec-
4 retary.

5 “(i) **OUTCOME MEASURES.**—(1) The Secretary shall
6 develop and provide to each State that receives a grant
7 under this section written guidance on the following:

8 “(A) Outcome measures.

9 “(B) Policies of the Department.

10 “(2) In developing outcome measures under para-
11 graph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

12 “(A) Increasing the use of veterans and vet-
13 erans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable
14 populations.

15 “(B) Increasing the number of county and trib-
16 al veterans service officers recognized by the Sec-
17 retary for the representation of veterans under chap-
18 ter 59 of this title.

19 “(j) **TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.**—(1) With respect
20 to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary
21 shall track the use of veterans benefits among the popu-
22 lation served by the grant, including the average period
23 of time between the date on which a veteran or other eligi-
24 ble claimant applies for such a benefit and the date on

1 which the veteran or other eligible claimant receives the
2 benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

3 “(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life
4 of the grant program established under this section, the
5 Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

6 “(A) the information tracked under paragraph
7 (1);

8 “(B) how the grants awarded under this section
9 serve the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska
10 Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans,
11 and veterans from other underserved communities;
12 and

13 “(C) other information provided by States pur-
14 suant to the grant reporting requirements.

15 “(k) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—(1) The Secretary
16 shall—

17 “(A) review the performance of each State that
18 receives a grant under this section; and

19 “(B) make information regarding such perform-
20 ance publicly available.

21 “(l) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a State
22 that receives a grant under this section and does not meet
23 the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under
24 subsection (i), the Secretary shall require the State to sub-
25 mit a remediation plan under which the State shall de-

1 scribe how and when it plans to meet such outcome meas-
2 ures.

3 “(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent
4 grant under this section to a State described in paragraph
5 (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan
6 submitted by the State.

7 “(m) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant
8 awarded under this section may not exceed 10 percent of
9 amounts made available for grants under this section for
10 the fiscal year in which the grant is awarded.

11 “(n) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Any grant
12 awarded under this section shall be used to supplement
13 and not supplant State and local funding that is otherwise
14 available.

15 “(o) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
16 is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for each
17 of fiscal years 2023 through 2027, \$50,000,000 to carry
18 out this section.

19 “(p) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20 “(1) The term ‘county or tribal veterans service
21 officer’ includes a local equivalent veterans service
22 officer.

23 “(2) The term ‘State’ includes each Indian
24 Tribe, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth
25 of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern

1 Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of
2 the United States.

3 “(3) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the
4 toll-free hotline for veterans established under sec-
5 tion 1720F(h) of this title.”.

6 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
7 at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended
8 by striking the items relating to sections 6307 and 6308
9 and inserting the following new items:

“6307. Grants to States to improve outreach to veterans.

“6308. Outreach for eligible dependents.

“6309. Biennial report to Congress.”.

10 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME
11 EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEE.—During fiscal years 2023
12 through 2027, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may hire
13 an additional full-time equivalent employee in the Office
14 of the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Af-
15 fairs, as compared to the number of full-time equivalent
16 employees that would otherwise be authorized for such of-
17 fice, to carry out duties under the accreditation, discipline,
18 and fees program.

