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

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

SEC. 7. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO VETERANS.

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

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

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

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

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

“(1) improve outreach and assistance to veterans and the spouses, children, and parents of veterans, to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about any veterans and veterans-related ben-
benefits and programs (including State veterans programs) for which they may be eligible; and

“(2) facilitate opportunities for such individuals to receive competent, qualified services in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of veterans benefits claims.

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

“(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance outreach activities;

“(2) to increase the number of county or tribal veterans service officers serving in the State by hiring new, additional such officers; or

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

“(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a State shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.
“(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

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

“(B) A description of the programs through which the State will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (i).

“(C) A description of how the State will distribute grant amounts equitably among counties (or Tribal lands, as the case may be) with varying levels of urbanization.

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

“(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants awarded under this section are equitably distributed among States with varying levels of urbanization.

“(e) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants under this section that will serve the following areas:

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

“(2) Areas with high rates of—

“(A) suicide among veterans; or
“(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.
“(f) Use of County or Tribal Veterans Service Officers.—A State that receives a grant under this section to carry out an activity described in subsection (b)(1) shall carry out the activity through—
“(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer of the State; or
“(2) if the State does not have a county or tribal veterans service officer, or if the county or Tribal veterans service officers of the State cover only a portion of that State, an appropriate entity of a State, local, or Tribal government, or another publicly funded entity, as determined by the Secretary.
“(g) Required Activities.—Any grant awarded under this section shall be used—
“(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;
“(2) to hire and maintain new, additional county or Tribal veterans service officers; or
“(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).
“(h) Other Permissible Activities.—A grant under this section may be used to provide education and training, including on-the-job training, for State, county, local, and tribal government employees who provide (or
when trained will provide veterans outreach services in order for those employees to obtain and maintain accreditation in accordance with procedures approved by the Secretary.

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

“(A) Outcome measures.

“(B) Policies of the Department.

“(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

“(A) Increasing the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable populations.

“(B) Increasing the number of county and tribal veterans service officers recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under chapter 59 of this title.

“(j) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) With respect to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary shall track the use of veterans benefits among the population served by the grant, including the average period of time between the date on which a veteran or other eligible claimant applies for such a benefit and the date on
which the veteran or other eligible claimant receives the benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

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

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

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

“(C) other information provided by States pursuant to the grant reporting requirements.

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

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

“(B) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

“(l) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a State that receives a grant under this section and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (i), the Secretary shall require the State to submit a remediation plan under which the State shall de-
scribe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

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

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

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

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

“(p) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

“(2) The term ‘State’ includes each Indian Tribe, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern
Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of
the United States.

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

(b) Clerical Amendment.—The table of sections
at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended
by striking the items relating to sections 6307 and 6308
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.’’.

(c) Authorization of Additional Full-Time
Equivalent Employee.—During fiscal years 2023
through 2027, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may hire
an additional full-time equivalent employee in the Office
of the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Af-
fairs, as compared to the number of full-time equivalent
employees that would otherwise be authorized for such of-
office, to carry out duties under the accreditation, discipline,
and fees program.