AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT
117–54
OFFERED BY MR. NEGUSE OF COLORADO

Page 1236, after line 17, insert the following:

SEC. ___ IMPROVING PROCESSING BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF DISABILITY CLAIMS FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER.

(a) Training for Claims Processors Who Handle Claims Relating to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.—

(1) Update training programs.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) shall, acting through the Under Secretary for Benefits (in this section referred to as the “Under Secretary”), update an ongoing, national training program for claims processors who review claims for compensation for service-connected post-traumatic stress disorder.

(2) Participation required.—Beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enact-
ment of this Act, the Secretary shall require that each claims processor described in paragraph (1) participates in the training established under paragraph (1) at least once each year beginning in the second year in which the claims processor carries out the duties of the claims processor for the Department.

(3) REQUIRED ELEMENTS.—The training established under paragraph (1) shall include instruction on stressor development and verification.

(b) STANDARDIZATION OF TRAINING AT REGIONAL OFFICES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary, shall standardize the training provided at regional offices of the Veterans Benefits Administration to the employees of such regional offices.

(c) FORMAL PROCESS FOR CONDUCT OF ANNUAL ANALYSIS OF TRENDS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary, shall establish a formal process to analyze, on an annual basis, training needs based on identified processing error trends.

(d) FORMAL PROCESS FOR CONDUCT OF ANNUAL STUDIES.—
(1) In general.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary, shall establish a formal process to conduct, on an annual basis, studies to help guide the national training program established under subsection (a)(1).

(2) Elements.—Each study conducted under paragraph (1) shall cover the following:

(A) Military post-traumatic stress disorder stressors.

(B) Decision-making claims for claims processors.

(e) Annual Updates to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Procedural Guidance.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year thereafter, the Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary, shall evaluate the guidance relating to post-traumatic stress disorder to determine if updates are warranted to provide claims processors of the Department with better resources regarding best practices for claims processing, including specific guidance regarding development of claims involving compensation for service-connected post-traumatic stress disorder.