

**AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 115-**

**70**

**OFFERED BY MS. SHEA-PORTER OF NEW  
HAMPSHIRE**

At the end of subtitle C of title VII, add the following new section:

1 **SEC. 7\_\_\_ . SERVICE DOG TRAINING THERAPY FOR MEM-**  
2 **BERS WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DIS-**  
3 **ORDER OR OTHER POST-DEPLOYMENT MEN-**  
4 **TAL HEALTH CONDITIONS.**

5 (a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Defense, acting  
6 through the Director of the Defense Health Agency, shall  
7 carry out a program under which members of the Armed  
8 Forces with post-traumatic stress disorder or other post-  
9 deployment mental health conditions train service dogs for  
10 veterans with disabilities. The Secretary shall carry out  
11 the program in a manner that ensures that such training  
12 is a form of therapy that addresses such post-traumatic  
13 stress disorder or other post-deployment mental health  
14 conditions.

15 (b) APPROPRIATE NONGOVERNMENT ENTITIES.—  
16 The Secretary shall carry out the program under sub-  
17 section (a) by entering into a contract with one or more

1 appropriate nongovernment entities that are certified in  
2 the training and handling of service dogs and have experi-  
3 ence carrying out such a program.

4 (c) MEMBER ELIGIBILITY.—A member of the Armed  
5 Forces may participate in the program under subsection  
6 (a) if the Secretary determines that—

7 (1) such member has post-traumatic stress dis-  
8 order or other post-deployment mental health condi-  
9 tions; and

10 (2) there are adequate program resources avail-  
11 able for the member to participate at the location of  
12 the member.

13 (d) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall seek to enter  
14 into a contract under subsection (b) with appropriate non-  
15 government entities located in close proximity to military  
16 medical treatment facilities.

17 (e) TRAINING AREA.—The Secretary shall provide to  
18 a nongovernment entity with which the Secretary enters  
19 into a contract under subsection (b) access to a training  
20 area in a facility of the Department that would be appro-  
21 priate for use in educating members of the Armed Forces  
22 participating in the program in the art and science of serv-  
23 ice dog training and handling. Such training area shall—

24 (1) include a dedicated space that is suitable  
25 for grooming and training dogs indoors;

- 1 (2) be wheelchair accessible;
- 2 (3) include classroom or lecture space;
- 3 (4) include office space for staff;
- 4 (5) include a suitable space for storing training
- 5 equipment;
- 6 (6) provide for periodic use of other training
- 7 areas for training the dogs with wheelchairs and
- 8 conducting other exercises;
- 9 (7) include outdoor exercise and toileting space
- 10 for dogs; and
- 11 (8) provide transportation for weekly field trips
- 12 to train dogs in other environments.

13 (f) DESIGN OF PROGRAM.—Each contract entered  
14 into under subsection (b) shall provide that the nongovern-  
15 ment entity shall—

16 (1) employ at least one person with clinical ex-  
17 perience related to mental health;

18 (2) ensure that members of the Armed Forces  
19 participating in the program receive training from  
20 certified service dog training instructors;

21 (3) ensure that each service dog in training  
22 participating in the program is taught all essential  
23 commands pertaining to service dog skills;

24 (4) ensure that the program involves both lec-  
25 ture of service dog training methodologies and prac-

1 tical hands-on training and grooming of service  
2 dogs; and

3 (5) ensure that the program is designed to—

4 (A) maximize the therapeutic benefits to  
5 members of the Armed Forces participating in  
6 the program; and

7 (B) provide well-trained service dogs to  
8 veterans with disabilities.

9 (g) ADMINISTRATION.—In order to carry out the pro-  
10 gram under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

11 (1) administer the program through the De-  
12 fense Health Agency under the direction of a cer-  
13 tified occupational recreational therapist with suffi-  
14 cient administrative experience to help oversee the  
15 program; and

16 (2) establish a director of therapeutic service  
17 dog training with a background working in social  
18 services, experience in teaching others to train serv-  
19 ice dogs in a military medical treatment facility set-  
20 ting, and at least one year of experience working  
21 with veterans or active duty service members with  
22 post-traumatic stress disorder in a clinical setting.

23 (h) COLLECTION OF DATA.—The Secretary shall col-  
24 lect data on the program under subsection (a) to deter-  
25 mine how effective the program is for the members of the

1 Armed Forces participating in the program. Such data  
2 shall include data to determine how effectively the pro-  
3 gram assists members in—

4 (1) reducing stigma associated with post-trau-  
5 matic stress disorder or other post-deployment men-  
6 tal health conditions;

7 (2) improving emotional regulation;

8 (3) improving patience;

9 (4) instilling or re-establishing a sense of pur-  
10 pose;

11 (5) providing an opportunity to help veterans;

12 (6) reintegrating into the community;

13 (7) exposing the dog to new environments and  
14 in doing so, helping the member reduce social isola-  
15 tion and withdrawal;

16 (8) building relationship skills, including par-  
17 enting skills;

18 (9) relaxing the hyper-vigilant survival state;

19 (10) improving sleep patterns; and

20 (11) enabling members to decrease the use of  
21 pain medication.

22 (i) REPORTS.—Each year the Secretary shall submit  
23 to the Committees' on Armed Services of the House of  
24 Representatives and the Senate a report on the program  
25 under subsection (a). Each such report shall include—

1           (1) the number of members of the Armed  
2 Forces participating in the program;

3           (2) a description of the services carried out  
4 under the program;

5           (3) the effects that participating in the program  
6 has on—

7                 (A) symptoms of post-traumatic stress dis-  
8 order and post-deployment adjustment difficul-  
9 ties, including depression, maintenance of sobri-  
10 ety, suicidal ideations, and homelessness;

11                 (B) potentially relevant physiological mark-  
12 ers that possibly relate to the interactions with  
13 the service dogs;

14                 (C) family dynamics;

15                 (D) insomnia and pain management; and

16                 (E) overall well-being; and

17           (4) the recommendations of the Secretary with  
18 respect to the expansion of the program.

19         (j) SERVICE DOG TRAINING INSTRUCTOR DE-  
20 FINED.—In this section, the term “service dog training  
21 instructor” means an instructor who provides the direct  
22 training of members of the Armed Forces with post-trau-  
23 matic stress disorder and other post-deployment mental

- 1 health conditions in the art and science of service dog
- 2 training and handling.

