

AMENDMENT TO
RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 119-33
OFFERED BY MR. SOTO OF FLORIDA

At the end of subtitle C of title VII, insert the following:

1 **SEC. 7___ . PILOT PROGRAM ON VIRTUAL REALITY DIGITAL**
2 **TWIN THERAPY FOR COMBAT-RELATED POST-**
3 **TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER.**

4 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Post-traumatic stress disorder remains one
6 of the most pervasive and debilitating injuries of
7 military service, with a significant portion of mem-
8 bers of the Armed Forces and veterans experiencing
9 chronic symptoms that do not fully respond to exist-
10 ing treatment approaches.

11 (2) Advances in modeling, simulation,
12 geospatial data integration, and artificial intelligence
13 have created the technical foundation for virtual re-
14 ality environments capable of replicating individual-
15 ized operational and traumatic scenarios with high
16 fidelity, offering new possibilities for personalized ex-
17 posure therapy.

1 (3) Current virtual reality and simulation tools
2 used in clinical settings are often limited in scope,
3 not interoperable, and not designed as integrated,
4 data-driven platforms for intensive post-traumatic
5 stress disorder treatment at scale.

6 (4) The Department of Defense has a compel-
7 ling interest in improving post-traumatic stress dis-
8 order treatment outcomes to restore readiness, re-
9 duce long-term disability costs, and fulfill its obliga-
10 tions to members who sustain service-connected psy-
11 chological injuries.

12 (5) Academic centers of excellence with dem-
13 onstrated expertise in trauma treatment, advanced
14 modeling and simulation, and immersive technology,
15 including institutions in Central Florida, are well po-
16 sitioned to partner with the Department on the de-
17 velopment and evaluation of next-generation post-
18 traumatic stress disorder treatment platforms.

19 (b) PILOT PROGRAM.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense,
21 acting through the Assistant Secretary of Defense
22 for Health Affairs, shall carry out a pilot program
23 to develop, deploy, and evaluate a virtual reality,
24 digital twin-enabled intensive outpatient treatment
25 model for members of the Armed Forces with com-

1 bat-related post-traumatic stress disorder at not
2 fewer than two military medical treatment facilities.

3 (2) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the pilot
4 program under paragraph (1), the Secretary of De-
5 fense shall coordinate with the Secretary of Veterans
6 Affairs to, where practicable, extend the program to
7 not fewer than one medical centers of the Depart-
8 ment of Veterans Affairs with a significant popu-
9 lation of veterans with service-connected combat-re-
10 lated post-traumatic stress disorder.

11 (c) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—Under the pilot program
12 under subsection (a), the Secretary of Defense shall—

13 (1) develop a digital twin framework capable of
14 generating data-rich, immersive virtual environments
15 that replicate real-world operational and traumatic
16 scenarios using geospatial data, historical mission
17 information, artificial intelligence, and advanced
18 modeling and simulation;

19 (2) integrate such digital twin environments
20 into evidence-based post-traumatic stress disorder
21 treatment protocols, including cognitive processing
22 therapy and prolonged exposure therapy, to enable
23 personalized, scenario-based exposure therapy tai-
24 lored to each individual's operational and trauma
25 history;

1 (3) provide participating sites with necessary
2 immersive hardware, software, and cybersecurity-
3 compliant infrastructure, and train clinical staff in
4 the delivery of the digital twin-enabled treatment
5 protocol; and

6 (4) rigorously measure and evaluate clinical
7 outcomes, including symptom reduction, post-trau-
8 matic stress disorder remission rates, treatment
9 dropout rates, and functional outcomes such as re-
10 turn-to-duty, occupational performance, and quality
11 of life, as well as implementation outcomes relevant
12 to potential system-wide scaling.

13 (d) ACADEMIC AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS.—In
14 carrying out the pilot program under subsection (a), the
15 Secretary of Defense shall, to the extent practicable, enter
16 into cooperative agreements with one or more academic
17 centers of excellence with demonstrated expertise in—

18 (1) trauma-focused psychotherapy and clinical
19 post-traumatic stress disorder research;

20 (2) advanced modeling and simulation, digital
21 twin technologies, and artificial intelligence; and

22 (3) immersive and extended reality platform de-
23 velopment and deployment.

24 (e) DATA SECURITY AND PRIVACY.—The Secretary
25 of Defense shall ensure that all personally identifiable

1 health information and operational data used in digital
2 twin environments developed under this section are pro-
3 tected in accordance with regulations issued pursuant to
4 the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
5 of 1996 (Public Law 104–191), applicable Department of
6 Defense privacy and data security directives, and cyberse-
7 curity standards issued by the Chief Information Officer
8 of the Department of Defense.

9 (f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days
10 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
11 of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Armed Serv-
12 ices of the Senate and the House of Representatives a re-
13 port on the implementation of the pilot program under
14 this section, including—

15 (1) the design of the pilot program, the military
16 medical treatment facilities and any medical centers
17 of the Department of Veterans Affairs selected to
18 participate, and the rationale for site selection;

19 (2) the research protocol, including primary
20 clinical and functional outcome measures and the
21 anticipated timeline for results;

22 (3) the digital twin and virtual reality platform
23 architecture, including data sources, scenario devel-
24 opment methodology, cybersecurity protections, and

1 interoperability with existing health information sys-
2 tems of the Department of Defense; and

3 (4) an assessment of the feasibility and pro-
4 jected costs of expanding digital twin-enabled virtual
5 reality post-traumatic stress disorder therapy across
6 additional military medical treatment facilities and
7 medical centers of the Department of Veterans Af-
8 fair if the Secretary determines that the pilot pro-
9 gram demonstrates improved clinical outcomes and
10 cost-effectiveness.

11 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the
12 amounts authorized to be appropriated by this Act for fis-
13 cal year 2027 for the Defense Health Program for oper-
14 ation and maintenance, \$8,000,000 is authorized to carry
15 out the pilot program under subsection (a).

16 (h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
17 tion shall be construed to limit the authority of the Sec-
18 retary of Defense to carry out research, development, test,
19 and evaluation activities related to virtual reality or digital
20 twin technologies for mental health applications under any
21 other provision of law.

