

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 117–

47

OFFERED BY MR. SOTO OF FLORIDA

Add at the end the following new title:

1 **TITLE IV—DON YOUNG VET-**
2 **ERANS ADVANCING CON-**
3 **SERVATION GRANT PROGRAM**

4 **SEC. 401. DON YOUNG VETERANS ADVANCING CONSERVA-**
5 **TION GRANT PROGRAM.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
7 ings:

8 (1) Veterans are among the greatest assets of
9 the United States.

10 (2) Veterans are highly skilled and trained indi-
11 viduals whose mission is to protect their commu-
12 nities.

13 (3) Studies show that community-focused
14 growth and engagement assists veterans with mental
15 health and combat-related trauma.

16 (4) SCUBA diving has been found to help im-
17 prove mental, physical, and emotional health and
18 has been specifically linked to improvement in the
19 symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

1 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days
3 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-
4 retary shall establish a program, to be known as the
5 Don Young Veterans Advancing Conservation Grant
6 Program, to award grants, on a competitive basis, to
7 facilitate the training and employment of veterans
8 for marine and coastal conservation activities.

9 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
11 award a grant under this section to a non-profit
12 organization that conducts marine and coastal
13 conservation activities in partnership with Fed-
14 eral, State, or scientific organizations.

15 (B) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to re-
16 ceive a grant under this section, an organiza-
17 tion shall submit to the Secretary an applica-
18 tion in such form, at such time, and containing
19 such information as the Secretary determines
20 appropriate.

21 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—An organization awarded
22 grant funds under this section may use such funds
23 to train or employ veterans to conduct marine and
24 coastal conservation activities, which may include—

25 (A) coral disease response;

- 1 (B) coral restoration and rehabilitation;
- 2 (C) invasive species eradication;
- 3 (D) marine debris removal;
- 4 (E) marine mammal and reptile rescue;
- 5 (F) scientific research and development;
- 6 (G) shark tagging;
- 7 (H) shipwreck mapping; and
- 8 (I) underwater survey work.

9 (4) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this sec-
10 tion, the Secretary shall coordinate with the Sec-
11 retary of the Interior and the Secretary of Veterans
12 Affairs.

13 (5) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
14 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
15 this section—

- 16 (A) \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;
- 17 (B) \$1,200,000 for fiscal year 2024;
- 18 (C) \$1,400,000 for fiscal year 2025;
- 19 (D) \$1,600,000 for fiscal year 2026; and
- 20 (E) \$1,800,000 for fiscal year 2027.

21 (6) SECRETARY.—In this section, the term
22 “Secretary” means the Secretary of Commerce, act-
23 ing through the Administrator of the National Oce-
24 anic and Atmospheric Administration.

