

**AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT**  
**117-54**  
**OFFERED BY MR. SABLAN OF NORTHERN**  
**MARIANA ISLANDS**

At the end of title LI of division E, insert the following:

1 **SEC. 5103. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY**  
2 **COMMITTEE ON UNITED STATES OUTLYING**  
3 **AREAS AND FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 5  
6 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding  
7 at the end the following new section:

8 **“§ 548. Advisory Committee on United States Out-**  
9 **lying Areas and Freely Associated States**

10 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish  
11 an advisory committee, to be known as the ‘Advisory  
12 Committee on United States Outlying Areas and Freely  
13 Associated States’, to provide advice and guidance to the  
14 Secretary on matters relating to covered veterans.

15 “(b) DUTIES.—The duties of the Committee shall be  
16 the following:

1           “(1) To advise the Secretary on matters relat-  
2           ing to covered veterans, including how the Secretary  
3           can improve the programs and services of the De-  
4           partment to better serve such veterans.

5           “(2) To identify for the Secretary evolving  
6           issues of relevance to covered veterans.

7           “(3) To propose clarifications, recommenda-  
8           tions, and solutions to address issues raised by cov-  
9           ered veterans.

10          “(4) To provide a forum for covered veterans,  
11          veterans service organizations serving covered vet-  
12          erans, and the Department to discuss issues and  
13          proposals for changes to regulations, policies, and  
14          procedures of the Department.

15          “(5) To identify priorities for and provide ad-  
16          vice to the Secretary on appropriate strategies for  
17          consultation with veterans service organizations serv-  
18          ing covered veterans.

19          “(6) To encourage the Secretary to work with  
20          other departments and agencies of the Federal Gov-  
21          ernment and Congress to ensure covered veterans  
22          are provided the full benefits of their status as cov-  
23          ered veterans.

24          “(7) To highlight contributions of covered vet-  
25          erans in the Armed Forces.

1           “(8) To conduct other duties as determined ap-  
2           propriate by the Secretary.

3           “(c) MEMBERSHIP.—(1) The Committee shall be  
4           comprised of 15 voting members appointed by the Sec-  
5           retary.

6           “(2) In appointing members pursuant to paragraph  
7           (1), the Secretary shall ensure the following:

8           “(A) At least one member is appointed to rep-  
9           resent covered veterans in each of the following  
10          areas:

11                   “(i) American Samoa.

12                   “(ii) Guam.

13                   “(iii) Puerto Rico.

14                   “(iv) The Commonwealth of the Northern  
15          Mariana Islands.

16                   “(v) The Virgin Islands of the United  
17          States.

18                   “(vi) The Federated States of Micronesia.

19                   “(vii) The Republic of the Marshall Is-  
20          lands.

21                   “(viii) The Republic of Palau.

22           “(B) Not fewer than half of the members ap-  
23           pointed are covered veterans, unless the Secretary  
24           determines that an insufficient number of qualified  
25           covered veterans are available.

1           “(C) Each member appointed resides in an area  
2           specified in subparagraph (A).

3           “(3) In appointing members pursuant to paragraph  
4 (1), the Secretary may consult with any Member of Con-  
5 gress who represents an area specified in paragraph  
6 (2)(A).

7           “(d) TERMS; VACANCIES.—(1) A member of the  
8 Committee—

9           “(A) shall be appointed for a term of two years;  
10          and

11          “(B) may be reappointed to serve an additional  
12          2-year term.

13          “(2) Not later than 180 days after receiving notice  
14 of a vacancy in the Committee, the Secretary shall fill the  
15 vacancy in the same manner as the original appointment.

16          “(e) MEETING FORMAT AND FREQUENCY.—(1) Ex-  
17 cept as provided in paragraph (2), the Committee shall  
18 meet in-person with the Secretary not less frequently than  
19 once each year and hold monthly conference calls as nec-  
20 essary.

21          “(2) Meetings held under paragraph (1) may be con-  
22 ducted virtually if determined necessary based on—

23                  “(A) Department protocols; and

24                  “(B) timing and budget considerations.

1       “(f) ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATION.—(1) Rep-  
2       representatives of relevant departments and agencies of the  
3       Federal Government may attend meetings of the Com-  
4       mittee and provide information to the Committee.

5       “(2) One representative of the Department shall at-  
6       tend each meeting of the Committee.

7       “(3) Representatives attending meetings under this  
8       subsection—

9               “(A) shall not be considered voting members of  
10       the Committee; and

11               “(B) may not receive additional compensation  
12       for services performed with respect to the Com-  
13       mittee.

14       “(g) SUBCOMMITTEES.—(1) The Committee may es-  
15       tablish subcommittees.

16       “(2) The Secretary may, in consultation with the  
17       Committee, appoint a member to a subcommittee estab-  
18       lished under paragraph (1) who is not a member of the  
19       Committee.

20       “(3) A subcommittee established under paragraph (1)  
21       may enhance the function of the Committee, but may not  
22       supersede the authority of the Committee or provide direct  
23       advice or work products to the Secretary.

1           “(h) REPORTS.—(1) Not less frequently than once  
2 every 2 years, the Committee shall submit to the Secretary  
3 and the appropriate committees of Congress a report—

4           “(A) containing such recommendations as the  
5 Committee may have for legislative or administrative  
6 action; and

7           “(B) describing the activities of the Committee  
8 during the previous two years.

9           “(2) Not later than 120 days after the date on which  
10 the Secretary receives a report under paragraph (1), the  
11 Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of  
12 Congress a written response to the report after—

13           “(A) giving the Committee an opportunity to  
14 review such written response; and

15           “(B) including in such written response any  
16 comments the Committee considers appropriate.

17           “(3) The Secretary shall make publicly available on  
18 an internet website of the Department—

19           “(A) each report the Secretary receives under  
20 paragraph (1);

21           “(B) each written response the Secretary sub-  
22 mits under paragraph (2); and

23           “(C) each report the Secretary receives under  
24 paragraph (3).

1           “(i) COMMITTEE PERSONNEL MATTERS.—A member  
2 of the Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, includ-  
3 ing per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized  
4 for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chap-  
5 ter 57 of title 5 while away from the home or regular place  
6 of business of the member in the performance of the duties  
7 of the Committee.

8           “(j) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this section,  
9 the Secretary shall consult with veterans service organiza-  
10 tions serving covered veterans.

11          “(k) TERMINATION.—The Committee shall terminate  
12 on the date that is 10 years after the date of the enact-  
13 ment of this section.

14          “(l) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

15               “(1) The term ‘appropriate committees of Con-  
16 gress’ means—

17                       “(A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs  
18                       of the House of Representatives; and

19                       “(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs  
20                       of the Senate.

21               “(2) The term ‘Committee’ means the Advisory  
22               Committee on United States Outlying Areas and  
23               Freely Associated States established under sub-  
24               section (a).

1           “(3) The term ‘covered veteran’ means a vet-  
2           eran residing in an area specified in subsection  
3           (c)(2)(A).

4           “(4) The term ‘veterans service organization  
5           serving covered veterans’ means any organization  
6           that—

7                   “(A) serves the interests of covered vet-  
8                   erans;

9                   “(B) has covered veterans in substantive  
10                  and policymaking positions within the organiza-  
11                  tion; and

12                  “(C) has demonstrated experience working  
13                  with covered veterans.”.

14           (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-  
15           tions at the beginning of chapter 5 of such title is  
16           amended by inserting after the item relating to sec-  
17           tion 547 the following new item:

          “548. Advisory Committee on United States Outlying Areas and Freely Associ-  
          ated States.”.

18           (b) DEADLINE FOR ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later  
19           than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,  
20           the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the advi-  
21           sory committee required by section 548 of title 38, United  
22           States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1) of this section.

23           (c) DEADLINE FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—Not  
24           later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary



1 establishes the advisory committee required by such sec-  
2 tion 548, the Secretary shall appoint the members of such  
3 advisory committee.

4 (d) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 180 days  
5 after the date on which the Secretary establishes the advi-  
6 sory committee required by such section 548, such advi-  
7 sory committee shall hold its first meeting.

