

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1147

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 7, 2025

Mr. VALADAO (for himself and Mr. MCGARVEY) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Accessibility
5 Advisory Committee Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL AC-**
7 **CESS.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Subchapter III of chapter 5
9 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at
10 the end the following new section:

1 **“§ 549. Advisory Committee on Equal Access**

2 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall es-
3 tablish an advisory committee on matters relating to ac-
4 cessibility of the Department for individuals with disabil-
5 ities.

6 “(2) The advisory committee established under para-
7 graph (1) shall be known as the ‘Veterans Advisory Com-
8 mittee on Equal Access’ (in this section referred to as the
9 ‘Advisory Committee’).

10 “(b) MEMBERSHIP.—(1) The Advisory Committee
11 shall be composed of 15 voting members, appointed by the
12 Secretary. In appointing such members, the Secretary
13 shall ensure the following:

14 “(A) Four are veterans with disabilities, includ-
15 ing mobility impairment, hearing, visual, and mental
16 or cognitive disabilities.

17 “(B) Four are experts on issues described in
18 subsection (f)(1)(A) or the provisions of law set
19 forth under subsection (f)(1)(B).

20 “(C) Two are employees of the Department,
21 one from the Section 508 Office and one from the
22 Architectural Accessibility Program, who oversee the
23 compliance of the Department with Federal accessi-
24 bility laws.

25 “(D) Five are representatives nominated by vet-
26 erans service organizations, recognized under section

1 5902 of this title, that advocate for veterans with
2 physical, sensory, mental, or cognitive disabilities.

3 “(2) The Advisory Committee shall also include four
4 ex officio members (or their designees):

5 “(A) The Under Secretary for Health.

6 “(B) The Under Secretary for Benefits.

7 “(C) The Under Secretary for Memorial Af-
8 fairs.

9 “(D) The chairperson of the Architectural and
10 Transportation Barriers Compliance Board estab-
11 lished by section 502 of the Rehabilitation Act of
12 1973 (Public Law 93–112; 29 U.S.C. 792).

13 “(c) TERMS; VACANCIES.—(1) A member of the Ad-
14 visory Committee shall be appointed for a term of two
15 years. The Secretary may reappoint members to the Advi-
16 sory Committee for such additional two-year terms as the
17 Secretary determines appropriate.

18 “(2) The Secretary shall fill a vacancy in the Advisory
19 Committee in the same manner as the original appoint-
20 ment not later than 180 days after such vacancy occurs.

21 “(d) MEETINGS; SUBCOMMITTEES; QUORUM.—(1)
22 The Advisory Committee shall meet not less frequently
23 than twice each year.

24 “(2) The Advisory Committee may form subcommit-
25 tees, which shall meet as often as required.

1 “(3) A majority of the members of the Advisory Com-
2 mittee shall constitute a quorum.

3 “(e) CHAIRPERSON.—(1) Members of the Advisory
4 Committee shall select a Chairperson from among the
5 members of the Advisory Committee.

6 “(2) If the position of Chairperson becomes vacant,
7 the members of the Advisory Committee shall select a new
8 Chairperson not later than 30 days after the date on which
9 the position became vacant.

10 “(f) DUTIES.—(1) On a regular basis, the Secretary
11 shall consult with and seek the advice of the Advisory
12 Committee—

13 “(A) on improving the accessibility of the De-
14 partment for individuals with disabilities, including
15 improving—

16 “(i) the accessibility of information of the
17 Department, including electronic information;

18 “(ii) the accessibility of the services and
19 benefits furnished by the Department;

20 “(iii) the accessibility of the facilities of the
21 Department;

22 “(iv) the accessibility of facilities of health
23 care providers furnishing care or services under
24 the Veterans Community Care Program under
25 section 1703 of this title; and

1 “(v) the acquisition process of the Depart-
2 ment to ensure that products and services, in-
3 cluding information technology and information
4 and communication technology (as defined in
5 the standards issued by the Architectural and
6 Transportation Barriers Compliance Board pur-
7 suant to section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
8 of 1973 (Public Law 93–112; 29 U.S.C.
9 794d)), are accessible when purchased; and

10 “(B) for ensuring the compliance of the Depart-
11 ment with provisions of law that ensure equal access
12 to Federal facilities, benefits, or services, for individ-
13 uals with disabilities, including the following:

14 “(i) The Americans with Disabilities Act of
15 1990 (Public Law 101–336; 42 U.S.C. 12101
16 et seq.).

17 “(ii) Sections 501, 504, and 508 of the Re-
18 habilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93–112;
19 29 U.S.C. 791, 794, and 794d).

20 “(iii) The Plain Writing Act of 2010 (Pub-
21 lic Law 111–274; 5 U.S.C. 301 note).

22 “(iv) The 21st Century Integrated Digital
23 Experience Act (Public Law 115–336; 44
24 U.S.C. 3501 note).

1 “(v) The Architectural Barriers Act of
2 1968 (Public Law 90–480; 42 U.S.C. 4151 et
3 seq.).

4 “(2) In advising to the Secretary, the Advisory Com-
5 mittee shall, focusing on the areas of greatest need for
6 the Department—

7 “(A) assess the disability access needs of vet-
8 erans, the public, and Department employees, for
9 full access to the Department’s information, services,
10 and benefits, by reviewing relevant information, such
11 as filed complaints by people with disabilities or
12 physical assessments of the Department’s facilities;

13 “(B) provide assessments of accessibility at the
14 Department and the compliance of the Department
15 with applicable provisions of law relating to dis-
16 ability and accessibility; and

17 “(C) provide advice on improving accessibility
18 at the Department, including the accessibility of
19 all—

20 “(i) communications, including internal
21 and public-facing;

22 “(ii) services and benefits; and

23 “(iii) facilities.

24 “(3) REPORTS.—(A) Not later than two years after
25 the date of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee,

1 and not less frequently than once every two years there-
2 after, the Advisory Committee shall submit to the Sec-
3 retary a report that, focusing on areas of greatest need
4 for the Department—

5 “(i) identifies and assesses access barriers af-
6 fecting veterans, the public, and employees of the
7 Department;

8 “(ii) determines the extent to which the pro-
9 grams and activities of the Department address the
10 barriers identified in clause (i), including compliance
11 of the Department with provisions of law relating to
12 accessibility law and reporting;

13 “(iii) provides recommendations and access pri-
14 orities to improve the accessibility of the Depart-
15 ment’s services, benefits, information, technology,
16 and facilities;

17 “(iv) provides a description of access improve-
18 ments and assesses the Department’s implementa-
19 tion of recommendations from previous reports of
20 the Advisory Committee, including any unmet rec-
21 ommendations that remain necessary for improving
22 accessibility for the Department; and

23 “(v) provides any recommendations for legisla-
24 tion, administrative action, or other actions that the
25 Advisory Committee determines appropriate.

1 “(B)(i) Not later than 90 days after the receipt of
2 a report required under subparagraph (A), the Secretary
3 shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees
4 a copy of such report and any comments and recommenda-
5 tions of the Secretary concerning such report that the Sec-
6 retary determines appropriate.

7 “(ii) The Secretary shall publish on a publicly acces-
8 sible website of the Department such report and such com-
9 ments and recommendations as may have been submitted
10 along with such report.

11 “(iii) In this subparagraph, the term ‘appropriate
12 congressional committee’ means—

13 “(I) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
14 House of Representatives;

15 “(II) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
16 Senate;

17 “(III) the Committee on Education and Work-
18 force of the House of Representatives; or

19 “(IV) the Special Committee on Aging of the
20 Senate.

21 “(g) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE PERSONNEL AND RE-**
22 **SOURCE MATTERS.—**(1) A member of the Commission
23 who is not an officer or employee of the Federal Govern-
24 ment shall not be compensated for the performance of the
25 duties of the Advisory Committee.

1 “(2) A member of the Advisory Committee shall be
2 allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of sub-
3 sistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies
4 under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, while away
5 from their homes or regular places of business in the per-
6 formance of services for the Advisory Committee.

7 “(3) The Secretary shall ensure that such personnel,
8 funding, and other resources are made available to the Ad-
9 visory Committee as the Secretary determines appropriate
10 to carry out the duties of the Advisory Committee.

11 “(4) The Secretary shall furnish to the Advisory
12 Committee such information as the Advisory Committee
13 may request from the Secretary, subject to applicable pro-
14 visions of law.

15 “(h) TERMINATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The
16 Advisory Committee shall terminate on the day that is 10
17 years after the date of the enactment of the Veterans Ac-
18 cessibility Advisory Committee Act of 2025.”.

19 (b) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections at
20 the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding, after
21 the item relating to section 548, the following new item:

“549. Advisory Committee on Equal Access.”.

22 (c) IMPLEMENTATION; ABOLITION OF INACTIVE AD-
23 VISORY COMMITTEE.—Not later than 180 days after the
24 date of the enactment of this Act, and before establishing
25 the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access under

1 section 549 of title 38, United States Code, as added by
2 subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

3 (1) abolish an advisory committee of the De-
4 partment of Veterans Affairs that—

5 (A) was not established by an Act of Con-
6 gress; and

7 (B) is inactive;

8 (2) consolidate two advisory committees de-
9 scribed in paragraph (1); or

10 (3) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-
11 fairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a
12 recommendation to abolish an advisory committee of
13 the Department that—

14 (A) was established by an Act of Congress;
15 and

16 (B) is inactive.

17 **SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.**

18 The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38,
19 United States Code, is amended by striking “June 9,
20 2034” each place it appears and inserting “June 23,
21 2034”.

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