

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1245

To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 1 (legislative day, MARCH 31), 2025

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Sup-
6 port Act of 2025”.

7 (b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents for
8 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—DEFINING MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

Sec. 101. Report on military sexual trauma in the digital age.

TITLE II—DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND CLAIMS PROCESSING

Sec. 201. Definition of military sexual trauma.

Sec. 202. Conforming changes relating to specialized teams to evaluate claims involving military sexual trauma.

Sec. 203. Evaluation of claims involving military sexual trauma.

Sec. 204. Choice of location of Department of Veterans Affairs medical examination for assessment of claims for compensation relating to disability resulting from military sexual trauma.

Sec. 205. Communications from the Department of Veterans Affairs to individuals who have experienced military sexual trauma.

Sec. 206. Study on training and processing relating to claims for disability compensation relating to military sexual trauma.

Sec. 207. Annual special focus review of claims for disability compensation for disabilities relating to military sexual trauma.

Sec. 208. Workgroup on medical examinations for claims for disability compensation for disabilities relating to military sexual trauma.

TITLE III—ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Sec. 301. Expansion of eligibility for counseling and treatment for military sexual trauma to include all former members of the reserve components of the armed forces.

Sec. 302. Connection to veterans health administration when a disability claim related to military sexual trauma is submitted to veterans benefits administration.

Sec. 303. Care relating to military sexual trauma for individuals who withdraw from or otherwise do not complete service at service academies.

1 **TITLE I—DEFINING MILITARY** 2 **SEXUAL TRAUMA**

3 **SEC. 101. REPORT ON MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA IN THE** 4 **DIGITAL AGE.**

5 (a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year
6 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
7 of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Vet-
8 erans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Vet-
9 erans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report
10 on military sexual trauma in the digital age.

1 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The report required under
2 subsection (a) shall include the following:

3 (1) A comprehensive evaluation and assessment
4 of current Department of Veterans Affairs statutes,
5 regulations, and agency guidance relating to military
6 sexual trauma for the purposes of access to health
7 care under chapter 17 of title 38, United States
8 Code, and compensation under chapter 11 of such
9 title to identify—

10 (A) gaps in coverage for health care and
11 compensation eligibility relating to military sex-
12 ual trauma involving online or other techno-
13 logical communications; and

14 (B) the feasibility and advisability of ex-
15 panding health care and compensation for trau-
16 ma that is nonsexual in nature involving online
17 or other technological communications.

18 (2) Recommendations for revising statutes, reg-
19 ulations, and agency guidance in response to the
20 evaluation and assessment under paragraph (1).

21 (c) CONSULTATION.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out subsection
23 (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult
24 veterans service organizations and such other stake-

1 holders as the Secretary considers relevant and ap-
 2 propriate.

3 (2) RELATION TO FACA.—Chapter 10 of title 5,
 4 United States Code, shall not apply to paragraph
 5 (1).

6 (d) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA DEFINED.—In this
 7 section, the term “military sexual trauma”—

8 (1) with respect to eligibility for health care,
 9 has the meaning given such term in section
 10 1720D(f) of title 38, United States Code, as added
 11 by section 301; and

12 (2) with respect to eligibility for compensation,
 13 has the meaning given such term in section 1166A(i)
 14 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section
 15 203(a).

16 **TITLE II—DISABILITY COM-** 17 **PENSATION AND CLAIMS** 18 **PROCESSING**

19 **SEC. 201. DEFINITION OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

20 In this title, the term “military sexual trauma” has
 21 the meaning given such term in section 1166A(i) of title
 22 38, United States Code, as added by section 203(a).

1 **SEC. 202. CONFORMING CHANGES RELATING TO SPECIAL-**
 2 **IZED TEAMS TO EVALUATE CLAIMS INVOLV-**
 3 **ING MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

4 Section 1166 of title 38, United States Code, is
 5 amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “for com-
 7 pensation for a covered mental health condition”
 8 and inserting “for compensation for a condition,
 9 which may include a covered mental health condi-
 10 tion,”; and

11 (2) by amending subsection (d) to read as fol-
 12 lows:

13 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ‘cov-
 14 ered mental health condition’ and ‘military sexual trauma’
 15 have the meanings given those terms in section 1166A(i)
 16 of this title.”.

17 **SEC. 203. EVALUATION OF CLAIMS INVOLVING MILITARY**
 18 **SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VI of chapter 11 of
 20 such title is amended by inserting after section 1166 the
 21 following new section:

22 **“§ 1166A. Evaluation of claims involving military sex-**
 23 **ual trauma**

24 “(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) In the case of any veteran
 25 who claims that a covered mental health condition based
 26 on military sexual trauma was incurred in or aggravated

1 by active military, naval, air, or space service, the Sec-
2 retary shall consider the following:

3 “(A) A diagnosis of such mental health condi-
4 tion by a mental health professional.

5 “(B) A link, established by medical evidence,
6 between current symptoms and a military sexual
7 trauma.

8 “(C) Credible corroborating evidence, in accord-
9 ance with subsections (b) and (c), that the claimed
10 military sexual trauma occurred.

11 “(2) The reasons for granting or denying service-con-
12 nection in each case described in paragraph (1) shall be
13 recorded in full.

14 “(b) NONMILITARY SOURCES OF EVIDENCE.—(1)
15 For purposes of subsection (a), evidence from sources
16 other than official records of the Department of Defense
17 regarding the veteran’s active military, naval, air, or space
18 service may corroborate the veteran’s account of the trau-
19 ma.

20 “(2) Examples of evidence described in paragraph (1)
21 include the following:

22 “(A) Records from law enforcement authorities,
23 rape crisis centers, mental health counseling centers,
24 hospitals, and physicians.

1 “(B) Pregnancy tests and tests for sexually
2 transmitted diseases.

3 “(C) Statements from family members, room-
4 mates, other members of the Armed Forces or vet-
5 erans, and clergy.

6 “(c) EVIDENCE OF BEHAVIOR CHANGES.—(1) For
7 purposes of subsection (a), evidence of a behavior change
8 following military sexual trauma is one type of relevant
9 evidence that may be found in sources described in such
10 subsection.

11 “(2) Examples of behavior changes that may be rel-
12 evant evidence of military sexual trauma include the fol-
13 lowing:

14 “(A) A request for a transfer to another mili-
15 tary duty assignment.

16 “(B) Deterioration in work performance.

17 “(C) Substance abuse or substance use dis-
18 order.

19 “(D) Episodes of depression, panic attacks, or
20 anxiety without an identifiable cause.

21 “(E) Unexplained economic or social behavior
22 changes.

23 “(d) NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPLY EVI-
24 DENCE.—The Secretary may not deny a claim of a veteran
25 for compensation under this chapter for a covered mental

1 health condition that is based on military sexual trauma
2 without first—

3 “(1) advising the veteran that evidence de-
4 scribed in subsections (b) and (c) may constitute
5 credible corroborating evidence of the military sexual
6 trauma; and

7 “(2) allowing the veteran an opportunity to fur-
8 nish such corroborating evidence or advise the Sec-
9 retary of potential sources of such evidence.

10 “(e) REVIEW OF EVIDENCE.—In reviewing a claim
11 for compensation described in subsection (a)(1), for any
12 evidence identified as part of such claim that is described
13 in subsection (b) or (c), the Secretary shall submit such
14 evidence to such medical or mental health professional as
15 the Secretary considers appropriate, including clinical and
16 counseling experts employed by the Department, to obtain
17 an opinion as to whether the evidence indicates that a mili-
18 tary sexual trauma occurred.

19 “(f) POINT OF CONTACT.—The Secretary shall en-
20 sure that each document provided to a veteran relating
21 to a claim for compensation described in subsection (a)(1)
22 includes contact information for an appropriate point of
23 contact with the Department.

24 “(g) SPECIALIZED TEAMS.—The Secretary shall en-
25 sure that all claims for compensation described in sub-

1 section (a)(1) are reviewed and processed by a specialized
 2 team established under section 1166 of this title.

3 “(h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING APPLICA-
 4 TION TO NONSEXUAL PERSONAL ASSAULT.—The Sec-
 5 retary shall not construe this section as supplanting the
 6 standard of proof or evidence required for claims for post-
 7 traumatic stress disorder based on nonsexual personal as-
 8 sault, which the Secretary shall continue to define in regu-
 9 lation.

10 “(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 “(1) The term ‘covered mental health condition’
 12 means post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, de-
 13 pression, or other mental health diagnosis that the
 14 Secretary determines to be related to military sexual
 15 trauma and which may be service-connected under
 16 section 1110 of this title.

17 “(2) The term ‘mental health professional’
 18 means a provider in the field of mental health who
 19 meets the credential, licensure, education, and train-
 20 ing requirements established by the Secretary.

21 “(3) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ means,
 22 with respect to a veteran, a physical assault of a sex-
 23 ual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual har-
 24 assment that occurred while the veteran was serving
 25 in the active military, naval, air, or space service.”.

1 (b) OUTREACH.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
3 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
4 retary of Veterans Affairs shall implement, with
5 input from the veteran community, an informative
6 outreach program for veterans regarding the stand-
7 ard of proof for evaluation of claims relating to mili-
8 tary sexual trauma, including requirements for a
9 medical examination and opinion.

10 (2) TARGETED OUTREACH.—In implementing
11 the program under paragraph (1), the Secretary
12 shall, to the extent practicable, target outreach to
13 veterans who submitted a claim relating to military
14 sexual trauma that was denied.

15 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
16 at the beginning of chapter 11 of such title is amended
17 by inserting after the item relating to section 1166 the
18 following new item:

“1166A. Evaluation of claims involving military sexual trauma.”.

19 **SEC. 204. CHOICE OF LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
20 **ERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL EXAMINATION FOR**
21 **ASSESSMENT OF CLAIMS FOR COMPENSA-**
22 **TION RELATING TO DISABILITY RESULTING**
23 **FROM MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1165 of title 38, United
25 States Code, is amended—

1 (1) in the section heading, by inserting “**and**
 2 **location of medical examination**” after “**ex-**
 3 **aminer**”;

4 (2) in subsection (a), by striking “a physical as-
 5 sault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature,
 6 or sexual harassment” and inserting “military sexual
 7 trauma (as defined in section 1166A(i) of this
 8 title)”;

9 (3) by redesignating subsection (c) as sub-
 10 section (d); and

11 (4) by inserting after subsection (b) the fol-
 12 lowing new subsection (c):

13 “(c) CHOICE OF EXAMINATION LOCATION.—The
 14 Secretary shall ensure that a veteran who requires a med-
 15 ical examination in support of a claim described in sub-
 16 section (a) may request that the medical examination take
 17 place at a medical facility of the Department by a qualified
 18 employee of the Department rather than at a location des-
 19 ignated by a contractor of the Department that performs
 20 such examinations on behalf of the Department.”.

21 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 22 at the beginning of chapter 11 of such title is amended
 23 by striking the item relating to section 1165 and inserting
 24 the following new item:

“1165. Choice of sex of medical examiner and location of medical examination
 for certain disabilities.”.

1 **SEC. 205. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF**
2 **VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO**
3 **HAVE EXPERIENCED MILITARY SEXUAL**
4 **TRAUMA.**

5 (a) REVIEW WORKGROUP.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
7 Affairs shall establish a workgroup to review cor-
8 respondence relating to military sexual trauma.

9 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The workgroup established
10 under paragraph (1) shall be composed of members
11 who shall be appointed by the Secretary from among
12 employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs
13 who are experts in military sexual trauma and men-
14 tal health, of whom—

15 (A) one or more shall be appointed from
16 among mental health providers of the Veterans
17 Health Administration;

18 (B) one or more shall be appointed from
19 among experts on sexual assault and sexual
20 harassment of the Veterans Benefits Adminis-
21 tration; and

22 (C) one or more shall be appointed from
23 among experts on sexual assault and sexual
24 harassment of the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

25 (3) DUTIES.—The workgroup established under
26 paragraph (1) shall—

(A) review standard correspondence, which may include templates for notices under sections 5103, 5104, 5104B, and 7104 of title 38, United States Code, from the Department to individuals who have experienced military sexual trauma for sensitivity; and

(B) ensure that the correspondence—

(i) treats such individuals with dignity and respect; and

(ii) does not re-traumatize such individuals.

(4) INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS EXPERIENCED MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “individual who has experienced military sexual trauma” means—

(A) an individual who has filed a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, relating to military sexual trauma;

(B) a veteran who has been awarded compensation under such chapter relating to military sexual trauma; or

(C) a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves), a former member of the Armed Forces,

1 or a veteran who is receiving care from the De-
 2 partment relating to military sexual trauma.

3 (b) CONTENTS OF CERTAIN WRITTEN COMMUNICA-
 4 TIONS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MILI-
 5 TARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.—

6 (1) NOTICE TO CLAIMANTS OF REQUIRED IN-
 7 FORMATION AND EVIDENCE.—Section 5103 of title
 8 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at
 9 the end the following new subsection:

10 “(c) WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO INDIVIDUALS
 11 WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MILITARY SEXUAL TRAU-
 12 MA.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that any written com-
 13 munication under this section from the Department to an
 14 individual who has experienced military sexual trauma in-
 15 cludes each of the following:

16 “(A) Contact information for each of the fol-
 17 lowing:

18 “(i) The military sexual trauma coordi-
 19 nator of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

20 “(ii) The military sexual trauma coordi-
 21 nator of the Veterans Health Administration.

22 “(iii) The Veterans Crisis Line.

23 “(iv) The facility of the Veterans Health
 24 Administration closest to where the individual
 25 resides.

1 “(v) The Vet Center closest to where the
2 individual resides.

3 “(B) Information on the eligibility of the indi-
4 vidual for services provided through the Vet Center
5 described in subparagraph (A)(v).

6 “(2) In this subsection:

7 “(A) The term ‘individual who has experienced
8 military sexual trauma’ means—

9 “(i) an individual who has filed a claim for
10 compensation under chapter 11 of this title re-
11 lating to military sexual trauma;

12 “(ii) a veteran who has been awarded com-
13 pensation under such chapter relating to mili-
14 tary sexual trauma; or

15 “(iii) a member of the Armed Forces (in-
16 cluding a member of the National Guard or Re-
17 serves), a former member of the Armed Forces,
18 or a veteran who is receiving care from the De-
19 partment relating to military sexual trauma.

20 “(B) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ has the
21 meaning given that term in section 1166A(i) of this
22 title.

23 “(C) The term ‘Vet Center’ has the meaning
24 given that term in section 1712A(h) of this title.

1 “(D) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means
2 the toll-free hotline for veterans established under
3 section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

4 (2) DECISIONS AND NOTICES OF DECISIONS.—
5 Section 5104 of title 38, United States Code, is
6 amended by adding at the end the following new
7 subsection:

8 “(e)(1) The Secretary shall ensure that any written
9 communication under this section from the Department
10 to an individual who has experienced military sexual trau-
11 ma includes each of the following:

12 “(A) Contact information for each of the fol-
13 lowing:

14 “(i) The military sexual trauma coordi-
15 nator of the Veterans Health Administration.

16 “(ii) The Veterans Crisis Line.

17 “(iii) The facility of the Veterans Health
18 Administration closest to where the individual
19 resides.

20 “(iv) The Vet Center closest to where the
21 individual resides.

22 “(B) Information on the eligibility of the indi-
23 vidual for services provided through the Vet Center
24 described in subparagraph (A)(iv).

1 “(2) The Secretary shall ensure that any written
2 communication under this section from the Department
3 to an individual who has experienced military sexual trauma that includes notification of an award of compensation
4 under chapter 11 of this title relating to military sexual
5 trauma includes—

6 “(A) the contact information described in paragraph (1); and

7 “(B) the contact information for the military
8 sexual trauma coordinator of the Veterans Benefits
9 Administration.

10 “(3) In this subsection:

11 “(A) The term ‘individual who has experienced
12 military sexual trauma’ means—

13 “(i) an individual who has filed a claim for
14 compensation under chapter 11 of this title relating to military sexual trauma;

15 “(ii) a veteran who has been awarded compensation under such chapter relating to military sexual trauma; or

16 “(iii) a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves), a former member of the Armed Forces, or a veteran who is receiving care from the Department relating to military sexual trauma.

1 “(B) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ has the
2 meaning given that term in section 1166A(i) of this
3 title.

4 “(C) The term ‘Vet Center’ has the meaning
5 given that term in section 1712A(h) of this title.

6 “(D) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means
7 the toll-free hotline for veterans established under
8 section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

9 (3) HIGHER-LEVEL REVIEW BY THE AGENCY OF
10 ORIGINAL JURISDICTION.—Section 5104B of title
11 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at
12 the end the following new subsection:

13 “(f) WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO INDIVIDUALS
14 WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MILITARY SEXUAL TRAU-
15 MA.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that any written com-
16 munication under this section from the Department to an
17 individual who has experienced military sexual trauma in-
18 cludes each of the following:

19 “(A) Contact information for each of the fol-
20 lowing:

21 “(i) The military sexual trauma coordi-
22 nator of the Veterans Health Administration.

23 “(ii) The Veterans Crisis Line.

1 “(iii) The facility of the Veterans Health
2 Administration closest to where the individual
3 resides.

4 “(iv) The Vet Center closest to where the
5 individual resides.

6 “(B) Information on the eligibility of the indi-
7 vidual for services provided through the Vet Center
8 described in subparagraph (A)(iv).

9 “(2) The Secretary shall ensure that any written
10 communication under this section from the Department
11 to an individual who has experienced military sexual trau-
12 ma that includes notification of an award of compensation
13 under chapter 11 of this title relating to military sexual
14 trauma includes—

15 “(A) the contact information described in para-
16 graph (1); and

17 “(B) the contact information for the military
18 sexual trauma coordinator of the Veterans Benefits
19 Administration.

20 “(3) In this subsection:

21 “(A) The term ‘individual who has experienced
22 military sexual trauma’ means—

23 “(i) an individual who has filed a claim for
24 compensation under chapter 11 of this title re-
25 lating to military sexual trauma;

1 “(ii) a veteran who has been awarded com-
 2 pensation under such chapter relating to mili-
 3 tary sexual trauma; or

4 “(iii) a member of the Armed Forces (in-
 5 cluding a member of the National Guard or Re-
 6 serves), a former member of the Armed Forces,
 7 or a veteran who is receiving care from the De-
 8 partment relating to military sexual trauma.

9 “(B) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ has the
 10 meaning given that term in section 1166A(i) of this
 11 title.

12 “(C) The term ‘Vet Center’ has the meaning
 13 given that term in section 1712A(h) of this title.

14 “(D) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means
 15 the toll-free hotline for veterans established under
 16 section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

17 (4) BOARD OF VETERANS’ APPEALS.—Section
 18 7104 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by
 19 adding at the end the following new subsection:

20 “(g)(1) The Secretary shall ensure that any written
 21 communication under this section from the Department
 22 to an individual who has experienced military sexual trau-
 23 ma include each of the following:

24 “(A) Contact information for each of the fol-
 25 lowing:

1 “(i) The military sexual trauma coordi-
2 nator of the Veterans Health Administration.

3 “(ii) The Veterans Crisis Line.

4 “(iii) The facility of the Veterans Health
5 Administration closest to where the individual
6 resides.

7 “(iv) The Vet Center closest to where the
8 individual resides.

9 “(B) Information on the eligibility of the indi-
10 vidual for services provided through the Vet Center
11 described in subparagraph (A)(iv).

12 “(2) The Secretary shall ensure that any written
13 communication under this section from the Department
14 to an individual who has experienced military sexual trau-
15 ma that includes notification of an award of compensation
16 under chapter 11 of this title relating to military sexual
17 trauma includes—

18 “(A) the contact information described in para-
19 graph (1); and

20 “(B) the contact information for the military
21 sexual trauma coordinator of the Veterans Benefits
22 Administration.

23 “(3) In this subsection:

24 “(A) The term ‘individual who has experienced
25 military sexual trauma’ means—

1 “(i) an individual who has filed a claim for
2 compensation under chapter 11 of this title re-
3 lating to military sexual trauma;

4 “(ii) a veteran who has been awarded com-
5 pensation under such chapter relating to mili-
6 tary sexual trauma; or

7 “(iii) a member of the Armed Forces (in-
8 cluding a member of the National Guard or Re-
9 serves), a former member of the Armed Forces,
10 or a veteran who is receiving care from the De-
11 partment relating to military sexual trauma.

12 “(B) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ has the
13 meaning given that term in section 1166A(i) of this
14 title.

15 “(C) The term ‘Vet Center’ has the meaning
16 given that term in section 1712A(h) of this title.

17 “(D) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means
18 the toll-free hotline for veterans established under
19 section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

20 **SEC. 206. STUDY ON TRAINING AND PROCESSING RELAT-**
21 **ING TO CLAIMS FOR DISABILITY COMPENSA-**
22 **TION RELATING TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAU-**
23 **MA.**

24 (a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Veterans
25 Affairs shall conduct a study on—

1 (1) the quality of training provided to personnel
2 of the Department of Veterans Affairs who review
3 claims for disability compensation under chapter 11
4 of title 38, United States Code, for disabilities relat-
5 ing to military sexual trauma; and

6 (2) the quality of the procedures of the Depart-
7 ment for reviewing the accuracy of the processing of
8 such claims.

9 (b) ELEMENTS.—The study required by subsection
10 (a) shall include the following:

11 (1) With respect to the quality of training de-
12 scribed in paragraph (1) of such subsection:

13 (A) Whether the Department ensures per-
14 sonnel complete such training on time.

15 (B) Whether the training has resulted in
16 improvements to the processing of claims de-
17 scribed in such subsection and issue-based accu-
18 racy.

19 (C) Such recommendations as the Sec-
20 retary may have for improving the training.

21 (2) With respect to the quality of procedures
22 described in paragraph (2) of such subsection:

23 (A) Whether the procedures of the Depart-
24 ment for reviewing the accuracy of the proc-
25 essing of claims described in such subsection

1 comport with generally accepted statistical
2 methodologies to ensure reasonable accuracy of
3 such reviews.

4 (B) Whether such procedures adequately
5 include mechanisms to correct errors found in
6 such reviews.

7 (C) A summary of quality assurance re-
8 views and reports conducted as part of such
9 procedures.

10 (D) Such recommendations as the Sec-
11 retary may have for improving such procedures.

12 (c) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year
13 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
14 shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
15 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
16 House of Representatives a report detailing the findings
17 of the Secretary with respect to the study conducted under
18 subsection (a).

19 **SEC. 207. ANNUAL SPECIAL FOCUS REVIEW OF CLAIMS FOR**
20 **DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR DISABIL-**
21 **ITIES RELATING TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAU-**
22 **MA.**

23 (a) ANNUAL SPECIAL FOCUS REVIEW.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each year, the Under Sec-
25 retary for Benefits of the Department of Veterans

1 Affairs shall conduct a special focus review on the
2 accuracy of the processing of claims for disability
3 compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United
4 States Code, for disabilities relating to military sexual
5 trauma.

6 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each review conducted under
7 paragraph (1) shall include a review of the following:

8 (A) A statistically significant, nationally
9 representative sample of all claims for benefits
10 under the laws administered by the Secretary of
11 Veterans Affairs relating to military sexual
12 trauma filed during the fiscal year preceding
13 the fiscal year in which the report is submitted.

14 (B) The accuracy of each decision made
15 with respect to each claim described in subparagraph
16 (A).

17 (C) The types of benefit entitlement errors
18 found, disaggregated by category.

19 (D) Trends from year to year.

20 (E) Training completion rates for personnel
21 of the Department who process claims
22 described in paragraph (1).

23 (b) REPROCESSING OF CLAIMS.—If the Under Sec-
24 retary finds, pursuant to a special focus review conducted
25 under subsection (a)(1), that an error was made with re-

1 spect to the entitlement of a veteran to a benefit under
 2 the laws administered by the Secretary, the Secretary shall
 3 return the relevant claim of the veteran to the appropriate
 4 office of the Department for reprocessing to ensure that
 5 the veteran receives an accurate decision with respect to
 6 the claim.

7 (c) REPORT.—Section 5501(b) of the Johnny Isakson
 8 and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Bene-
 9 fits Improvement Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–315; 134
 10 Stat. 5048) is amended—

11 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “through
 12 2027” and inserting “until the date described in sec-
 13 tion 207(d) of the Servicemembers and Veterans
 14 Empowerment and Support Act of 2025”; and

15 (2) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the
 16 following new subparagraph:

17 “(I) The findings of the most recent spe-
 18 cial focus review conducted under subsection
 19 (a)(1) of section 207 of the Servicemembers
 20 and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act
 21 of 2025, including—

22 “(i) the elements under subsection
 23 (a)(2) of such section;

1 “(ii) the number of claims returned
 2 for reprocessing under subsection (b) of
 3 such section; and

4 “(iii) the number of claims described
 5 in clause (ii) for which the decision relat-
 6 ing to service-connection or entitlement to
 7 compensation changed as a result of re-
 8 processing the claim.”.

9 (d) SUNSET.—On the date that the Under Secretary
 10 determines, pursuant to special focus reviews conducted
 11 under paragraph (1) of subsection (a), that the accuracy
 12 rates under paragraph (2)(B) of such subsection have
 13 been 95 percent or greater for five consecutive years, sub-
 14 section (a)(1) shall cease to be in effect.

15 **SEC. 208. WORKGROUP ON MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR**
 16 **CLAIMS FOR DISABILITY COMPENSATION**
 17 **FOR DISABILITIES RELATING TO MILITARY**
 18 **SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
 20 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
 21 erans Affairs shall establish a workgroup on medical ex-
 22 aminations for claims for disability compensation under
 23 chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, for disabilities
 24 relating to military sexual trauma (in this section referred
 25 to as the “workgroup”).

1 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The workgroup shall be com-
2 posed of the following:

3 (1) Staff of the operations center for military
4 sexual trauma of the Department of Veterans Af-
5 fairs who have experience reviewing the quality of
6 medical examinations in support of claims for dis-
7 ability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38,
8 United States Code.

9 (2) Staff of the Medical Disability Examination
10 Office of the Department.

11 (3) Veterans service officers who have experi-
12 ence with claims described in subsection (a).

13 (4) Medical examiners who have experience with
14 such claims.

15 (5) Staff of the Veterans Experience Office of
16 the Department.

17 (6) Such other individuals as the Secretary con-
18 siders appropriate.

19 (c) DUTIES.—Not later than 180 days after the date
20 of the enactment of this Act, the Workgroup shall—

21 (1) review the quality of medical examinations
22 described in subsection (a);

23 (2) review the feasibility of minimizing re-ex-
24 aminations for conditions relating to military sexual
25 trauma; and

1 (3) submit to the Under Secretary for Benefits
2 of the Department and the Secretary recommenda-
3 tions on how to—

4 (A) eliminate re-traumatization of individ-
5 uals who file claims described in subsection (a);
6 and

7 (B) reduce the overdevelopment of such
8 claims.

9 (d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
10 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
11 to Congress a report that includes the following:

12 (1) The views of the workgroup on efforts by
13 the Department to eliminate re-traumatization of in-
14 dividuals who file claims described in subsection (a).

15 (2) Legislative proposals to improve the experi-
16 ence of such individuals in pursuing such claims.

17 (3) The recommendations submitted under sub-
18 section (c)(3).

19 (4) The plan of the Under Secretary for Bene-
20 fits of the Department and the Secretary to imple-
21 ment such recommendations.

22 (e) REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than
23 one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
24 Under Secretary for Benefits of the Department and the
25 Secretary shall—

(1) review the recommendations submitted under subsection (c)(3); and

(2) implement the recommendations that, as determined by the Under Secretary and the Secretary, would improve the claims process for individuals who file claims described in subsection (a).

TITLE III—ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

SEC. 301. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR COUNSELING AND TREATMENT FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA TO INCLUDE ALL FORMER MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

Section 1720D of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “a physical assault” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “military sexual trauma.”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “was suffered” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “resulted from military sexual trauma.”; and

1 (2) by striking subsections (f) and (g) and in-
 2 serting the following new subsection (f):

3 “(f) In this section:

4 “(1) The term ‘former member of the Armed
 5 Forces’ means a person who served on active duty,
 6 active duty for training, or inactive duty training,
 7 and who was discharged or released therefrom under
 8 any condition that is not—

9 “(A) a discharge by court-martial, unless
 10 the Secretary determines an exception to the
 11 bar to benefits applies; or

12 “(B) a discharge subject to a bar to bene-
 13 fits under section 5303 of this title.

14 “(2) The term ‘military sexual trauma’ means,
 15 with respect to a member of the Armed Forces or
 16 former member of the Armed Forces, a physical as-
 17 sault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature,
 18 or sexual harassment which occurred while the mem-
 19 ber or former member was serving on duty, regard-
 20 less of duty status or line of duty determination (as
 21 that term is used in section 12323 of title 10).

22 “(3) The term ‘sexual harassment’ means unso-
 23 licited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature
 24 which is threatening in character.”.

1 **SEC. 302. CONNECTION TO VETERANS HEALTH ADMINIS-**
2 **TRATION WHEN A DISABILITY CLAIM RE-**
3 **LATED TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA IS SUB-**
4 **MITTED TO VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINIS-**
5 **TRATION.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 14 days after the
7 date on which a veteran submits a claim for disability com-
8 pensation to the Veterans Benefits Administration for a
9 disability related to military sexual trauma, the Secretary
10 of Veterans Affairs shall send a communication to the vet-
11 eran with the following information:

12 (1) The contact information for the nearest
13 military sexual trauma coordinator for the veteran
14 at the Veterans Benefits Administration and a de-
15 scription of the assistance such coordinator can pro-
16 vide.

17 (2) The contact information for the nearest
18 military sexual trauma coordinator for the veteran
19 at the Veterans Health Administration and a de-
20 scription of the assistance such coordinator can pro-
21 vide.

22 (3) The types of services that individuals who
23 have experienced military sexual trauma are eligible
24 to receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs,
25 including the nearest locations, including the nearest

1 Vet Center, and the contact information for such
2 services.

3 (4) The contact information for the Veterans
4 Crisis Line established under section 1720F(h) of
5 title 38, United States Code.

6 (5) Such other information on services, care, or
7 resources for military sexual trauma as the Sec-
8 retary determines appropriate.

9 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.—The term
11 “military sexual trauma”—

12 (A) with respect to eligibility for health
13 care, has the meaning given such term in sec-
14 tion 1720D(f) of title 38, United States Code,
15 as added by section 301; and

16 (B) with respect to eligibility for com-
17 pensation, has the meaning given such term in
18 section 1166A(i) of title 38, United States
19 Code, as added by section 203(a).

20 (2) VET CENTER.—The term “Vet Center” has
21 the meaning given that term in section 1712A(h) of
22 title 38, United States Code.

1 **SEC. 303. CARE RELATING TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA**
 2 **FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO WITHDRAW FROM OR**
 3 **OTHERWISE DO NOT COMPLETE SERVICE AT**
 4 **SERVICE ACADEMIES.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
 6 fairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, the
 7 Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Secretary of
 8 Transportation, shall ensure that each individual who
 9 withdraws from, or otherwise does not complete service at,
 10 a service academy is provided—

11 (1) information on the potential eligibility of
 12 such individual for care and counseling relating to
 13 military sexual trauma provided through the Depart-
 14 ment of Veterans Affairs; and

15 (2) the option to receive copies of—

16 (A) the individual's service treatment
 17 records or military personnel records that docu-
 18 ment military sexual trauma;

19 (B) reporting forms of the Department of
 20 Defense, the Department of Homeland Secu-
 21 rity, or the Department of Transportation on
 22 sexual assault or sexual harassment for which
 23 the individual was the victim; and

24 (C) any investigative reports into military
 25 sexual trauma that occurred during the individ-

1 ual’s service in the Armed Forces and for which
2 the individual was the victim.

3 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.—The term
5 “military sexual trauma”—

6 (A) with respect to eligibility for health
7 care, has the meaning given such term in sec-
8 tion 1720D(f) of title 38, United States Code,
9 as added by section 301; and

10 (B) with respect to eligibility for com-
11 pensation, has the meaning given such term in
12 section 1166A(i) of title 38, United States
13 Code, as added by section 203(a).

14 (2) SERVICE ACADEMY.—The term “service
15 academy” means any of the following:

16 (A) The United States Military Academy.

17 (B) The United States Naval Academy.

18 (C) The United States Air Force Academy.

19 (D) The United States Coast Guard Acad-
20 emy.

21 (E) The United States Merchant Marine
22 Academy.

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