

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1543

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 30, 2025

Mr. BANKS (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) 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 establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, 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 Opportunity
5 Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPOR-**
 2 **TUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION.**

3 (a) VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRAN-
 4 SITION ADMINISTRATION.—

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

8 **“CHAPTER 80—VETERANS ECONOMIC OP-**
 9 **PORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMIN-**
 10 **ISTRATION**

“Sec.

“8001. Organization of Administration.

“8002. Functions of Administration.

“8003. Annual report to Congress.

11 **“§ 8001. Organization of Administration**

12 “(a) VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND
 13 TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION.—(1) There is in the De-
 14 partment a Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transi-
 15 tion Administration.

16 “(2) The primary function of the Veterans Economic
 17 Opportunity and Transition Administration is the admin-
 18 istration of the programs of the Department that provide
 19 assistance related to economic opportunity to veterans and
 20 their dependents and survivors.

21 “(b) UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC OPPOR-
 22 TUNITY AND TRANSITION.—The Veterans Economic Op-
 23 portunity and Transition Administration is under the

1 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and
2 Transition, who is directly responsible to the Secretary for
3 the operations of the Administration.

4 **“§ 8002. Functions of Administration**

5 “The Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition
6 Administration is responsible for the administration of the
7 following:

8 “(1) Vocational rehabilitation and employment
9 programs.

10 “(2) Educational assistance programs.

11 “(3) Veterans’ housing loan and related pro-
12 grams.

13 “(4) The responsibilities of the Secretary with
14 respect to the Transition Assistance Program under
15 section 1144 of title 10.

16 “(5) Any other program of the Department
17 that the Secretary determines appropriate.

18 **“§ 8003. Annual report to Congress**

19 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall include in
20 the annual report to the Congress required by section 529
21 of this title a report on the programs administered by the
22 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and
23 Transition.

24 “(b) CONTENTS.—Each report under subsection (a)
25 shall include the following with respect to each program

1 described in such subsection during the fiscal year covered
 2 by that report:

3 “(1) The number of claims received.

4 “(2) The number of claims decided.

5 “(3) The average processing time for a claim.

6 “(4) The number of successful outcomes (as de-
 7 termined by the Secretary).

8 “(5) The number of full-time equivalent em-
 9 ployees.

10 “(6) The amounts expended for information
 11 technology.”.

12 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The tables of
 13 chapters at the beginning of title 38, United States
 14 Code, and of part V of title 38, United States Code,
 15 are each amended by inserting after the item relat-
 16 ing to chapter 79 the following new item:

**“80. Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Ad-
 ministration 8001”.**

17 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Chapter 80 of title 38,
 18 United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take
 19 effect on October 1 of the first fiscal year commencing
 20 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

21 (c) LABOR RIGHTS.—Any labor rights, inclusion in
 22 the bargaining unit, and collective bargaining agreement
 23 that affects an employee of the Department of Veterans
 24 Affairs who is transferred to the Veterans Economic Op-

1 portunity and Transition Administration, as established
 2 under chapter 80 of title 38, United States Code, as added
 3 by subsection (a), shall apply in the same manner to such
 4 employee after such transfer.

5 (d) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
 6 gress that the creation of the Veterans Economic Oppor-
 7 tunity and Transition Administration and the transfer of
 8 functions to such Administration from the Veterans Bene-
 9 fits Administration should not, directly or indirectly—

10 (1) cause the budget or spending of the Depart-
 11 ment of Veterans Affairs to increase or decrease rel-
 12 ative to the budget or level of spending of the De-
 13 partment in effect on the day before the date of the
 14 enactment of this Act; or

15 (2) serve as a basis or justification for any in-
 16 crease or decrease in the number of full-time equiva-
 17 lent employees of the Department.

18 **SEC. 3. UNDER SECRETARY FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC OP-**
 19 **PORTUNITY AND TRANSITION.**

20 (a) UNDER SECRETARY.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 38, United
 22 States Code, is amended by inserting after section
 23 306 the following new section:

1 **“§ 306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Op-**
 2 **portunity and Transition**

3 “(a) UNDER SECRETARY.—(1) There is in the De-
 4 partment an Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Op-
 5 portunity and Transition, who is appointed by the Presi-
 6 dent, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

7 “(2) The Under Secretary for Veterans Economic
 8 Opportunity and Transition shall be appointed without re-
 9 gard to political affiliation or activity and solely on the
 10 basis of demonstrated ability in—

11 “(A) the administration of programs within the
 12 Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Ad-
 13 ministration or programs of similar content and
 14 scope; and

15 “(B) information technology.

16 “(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Under Secretary for
 17 Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition is the
 18 head of, and is directly responsible to the Secretary for
 19 the operations of, the Veterans Economic Opportunity and
 20 Transition Administration.

21 “(c) VACANCIES.—(1) Whenever a vacancy in the po-
 22 sition of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
 23 tunity and Transition occurs or is anticipated, the Sec-
 24 retary shall establish a commission to recommend individ-
 25 uals to the President for appointment to the position.

1 “(2) A commission established under this subsection
2 shall be composed of the following members appointed by
3 the Secretary:

4 “(A) Three persons representing education and
5 training, vocational rehabilitation, employment, real
6 estate, mortgage finance and related industries, and
7 survivor benefits activities affected by the Veterans
8 Economic Opportunity and Transition Administra-
9 tion.

10 “(B) Two persons representing veterans served
11 by the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transi-
12 tion Administration.

13 “(C) Two persons who have experience in the
14 management of private sector benefits programs of
15 similar content and scope to the economic oppor-
16 tunity and transition programs of the Department.

17 “(D) The Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

18 “(E) The chairman of the Veterans’ Advisory
19 Committee on Education formed under section 3692
20 of this title.

21 “(F) One person who has held the position of
22 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity
23 and Transition, if the Secretary determines that it
24 is desirable for such person to be a member of the
25 commission.

1 “(3) A commission established under this subsection
 2 shall recommend at least three individuals for appoint-
 3 ment to the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Eco-
 4 nomic Opportunity and Transition. The commission shall
 5 submit all recommendations to the Secretary. The Sec-
 6 retary shall forward the recommendations to the President
 7 and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate
 8 and House of Representatives with any comments the Sec-
 9 retary considers appropriate. Thereafter, the President
 10 may request the commission to recommend additional in-
 11 dividuals for appointment.

12 “(4) The Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant
 13 Secretary of Veterans Affairs who performs personnel
 14 management and labor relations functions shall serve as
 15 the executive secretary of a commission established under
 16 this subsection.”.

17 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
 18 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
 19 by inserting after the item relating to section 306
 20 the following new item:

“306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition.”.

21 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Title 38, United
 22 States Code, is further amended—

23 (1) in section 306(c)(2), by striking subpara-
 24 graphs (A) and (E) and redesignating subpara-

1 graphs (B), (C), (D), and (F), as subparagraphs (A)
2 through (D), respectively;

3 (2) in section 317(d)(2), by inserting after
4 “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the
5 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity
6 and Transition,”;

7 (3) in section 318(d)(2), by inserting after
8 “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the
9 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity
10 and Transition,”;

11 (4) in section 516(e)(2)(C), by striking “Health
12 and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting
13 “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the
14 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity
15 and Transition”;

16 (5) in section 541(a)(2)(B), by striking “Health
17 and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting
18 “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the
19 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity
20 and Transition”;

21 (6) in section 542(a)(2)(B)(iii), by striking
22 “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and
23 inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits,
24 and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Op-
25 portunity and Transition”;

1 (7) in section 544(a)(2)(B)(vi), by striking
 2 “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and
 3 inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits,
 4 and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Op-
 5 portunity and Transition”;

6 (8) in section 709(c)(2)(A), by inserting after
 7 “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the
 8 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity
 9 and Transition,”;

10 (9) in section 7701(a), by inserting after “as-
 11 sistance” the following: “, other than assistance re-
 12 lated to Economic Opportunity and Transition,”;
 13 and

14 (10) in section 7703, by striking paragraphs (2)
 15 and (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as
 16 paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively.

17 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 306A of title 38,
 18 United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and the
 19 amendments made by this section, shall take effect on Oc-
 20 tober 1, 2025.

21 **SEC. 4. TRANSFER OF SERVICES.**

22 (a) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days
 23 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
 24 of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on
 25 Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representa-

1 tives a report on the progress toward establishing the Vet-
2 erans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administra-
3 tion, as established under section 8001 of title 38, United
4 States Code, as added by section 2, and the transition of
5 the provision of services to veterans by such Administra-
6 tion.

7 (b) CERTIFICATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
8 fairs may not transfer the function of providing any serv-
9 ices to veterans to the Veterans Economic Opportunity
10 and Transition Administration, as established under sec-
11 tion 8001 of title 38, United States Code, as added by
12 section 2, until the Secretary submits to the Committees
13 on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Rep-
14 resentatives certification that—

15 (1) the transition of the provision of services to
16 such Administration will not negatively affect the
17 provision of such services to veterans; and

18 (2) such services are ready to be transferred.

19 (c) DEADLINE FOR CERTIFICATION.—The Secretary
20 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of
21 the Senate and House of Representatives the certification
22 required by subsection (b)—

23 (1) no earlier than April 1 of the first fiscal
24 year commencing after the date of the enactment of
25 this Act; and

1 (2) no later than September 1 of the first fiscal
2 year commencing after the date of the enactment of
3 this Act.

4 (d) FAILURE TO CERTIFY.—If the Secretary fails to
5 submit the certification required by subsection (b) by the
6 date specified in subsection (c)(2), the Secretary shall sub-
7 mit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate
8 and House of Representatives a report that includes—

9 (1) the reason why the certification was not
10 made by such date; and

11 (2) the estimated date when the certification
12 will be made.

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