

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2316

To require the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on wait times for veterans seeking medical appointments and treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs, to prohibit closure of medical facilities of the Department, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 12, 2014

Mr. THUNE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on wait times for veterans seeking medical appointments and treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs, to prohibit closure of medical facilities of the Department, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. REPORT ON WAIT TIMES FOR VETERANS SEEK-**
2 **ING MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS AND TREAT-**
3 **MENT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
4 **ERANS AFFAIRS AND PROHIBITION ON CLO-**
5 **SURE OF MEDICAL FACILITIES.**

6 (a) REPORT.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the In-
9 spector General of the Department of Veterans Af-
10 fairs shall submit to Congress a report on wait times
11 for veterans seeking medical appointments and
12 treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

13 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by para-
14 graph (1) shall include the following:

15 (A) Information on wait times for veterans
16 throughout the United States in seeking med-
17 ical appointments and treatment from the De-
18 partment.

19 (B) A determination by the Inspector Gen-
20 eral as to whether the wait times for veterans
21 seeking medical appointments and treatment
22 from the Department have been prolonged by
23 employees of the Department without a valid
24 medical or administrative reason.

25 (b) PROHIBITION ON CLOSURE OF MEDICAL FACILI-
26 TIES OF THE DEPARTMENT.—After the date of the enact-

1 ment of this Act, and before the submittal of the report
2 under subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
3 shall not—

4 (1) close any medical facility of the Department
5 of Veterans Affairs; or

6 (2) use any funds of the Department to prepare
7 any environment impact statement that is related to
8 the closure of a medical facility of the Department.

9 (c) PROLONGED WAIT TIMES WITHOUT VALID REA-
10 SON.—

11 (1) PROHIBITION ON CLOSURE OF MEDICAL FA-
12 CILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT.—Except as pro-
13 vided in paragraphs (2) and (3), if, in the report
14 submitted under subsection (a), the Inspector Gen-
15 eral determines that wait times for veterans seeking
16 medical appointments and treatment from the De-
17 partment have been prolonged by employees of the
18 Department without a valid medical or administra-
19 tive reason, the Secretary shall not close any medical
20 facility of the Department or use any funds of the
21 Department to prepare any environment impact
22 statement that is related to the closure of a medical
23 facility of the Department.

24 (2) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may close a
25 medical facility of the Department or use funds of

1 the Department to prepare an environmental impact
2 statement related to the closure of a medical facility
3 of the Department if, not later than 180 days before
4 such closure or use of funds, the Secretary deter-
5 mines and certifies to Congress that the closure of
6 such medical facility will not do any of the following:

7 (A) Increase the wait times for veterans in
8 the catchment area of such medical facility in
9 seeking medical appointments and treatment
10 from such medical facility.

11 (B) Decrease the quality of care provided
12 to such veterans.

13 (C) Impede the access of such veterans to
14 specialized health care services.

15 (D) Impede the access of such veterans to
16 residential rehabilitation treatment programs of
17 the Department and other inpatient care.

18 (E) Increase the distance required to be
19 traveled by such veterans to receive inpatient
20 and outpatient care.

21 (F) Impede the access of such veterans
22 that are members of Indian tribes (as that term
23 is defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Deter-
24 mination and Education Assistance Act (25
25 U.S.C. 450b)) to medical care.

1 (3) TERMINATION.—The prohibition under
2 paragraph (1) shall terminate on the date on which
3 the Inspector General determines and certifies to
4 Congress that wait times for veterans seeking med-
5 ical appointments and treatment from the Depart-
6 ment are not being prolonged by employees of the
7 Department without a valid medical or administra-
8 tive reason.

9 (d) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT DE-
10 FINED.—In this section, the term “environmental impact
11 statement” means the detailed statement of environmental
12 impacts of a project required to be prepared pursuant to
13 the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.
14 4321 et seq.).

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