

□ 1706

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE) at 5 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

CLAY HUNT SUICIDE PREVENTION
FOR AMERICAN VETERANS ACT

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 203) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 203

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act" or the "Clay Hunt SAV Act".

SEC. 2. EVALUATIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) EVALUATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 1709B. Evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs

"(a) EVALUATIONS.—(1) Not less frequently than once during each period specified in paragraph (3), the Secretary shall provide for the conduct of an evaluation of the mental health care and suicide prevention programs carried out under the laws administered by the Secretary.

"(2) Each evaluation conducted under paragraph (1) shall—

"(A) use metrics that are common among and useful for practitioners in the field of mental health care and suicide prevention;

"(B) identify the most effective mental health care and suicide prevention programs conducted by the Secretary, including such programs conducted at a Center of Excellence;

"(C) identify the cost-effectiveness of each program identified under subparagraph (B);

"(D) measure the satisfaction of patients with respect to the care provided under each such program; and

"(E) propose best practices for caring for individuals who suffer from mental health

disorders or are at risk of suicide, including such practices conducted or suggested by other departments or agencies of the Federal Government, including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services.

"(3) The periods specified in this paragraph are the following:

"(A) The period beginning on the date on which the Secretary awards the contract under paragraph (4) and ending on September 30, 2018.

"(B) Each fiscal year beginning on or after October 1, 2018.

"(4) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall seek to enter into a contract with an independent third party unaffiliated with the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct evaluations under paragraph (1).

"(5) The independent third party that is awarded the contract under paragraph (4) shall submit to the Secretary each evaluation conducted under paragraph (1).

"(b) ANNUAL SUBMISSION.—Not later than December 1, 2018, and each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report that contains the following:

"(1) The most recent evaluations submitted to the Secretary under subsection (a)(5) that the Secretary has not previously submitted to such Committees.

"(2) Any recommendations the Secretary considers appropriate."

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1709A the following new item:

"1709B. Evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs."

(b) INTERIM REPORTS.—Not later than September 30 of each of 2016 and 2017, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the independent third party awarded a contract by the Secretary pursuant to section 1709B(a)(4) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the mental health care and suicide prevention programs carried out under the laws administered by the Secretary that includes, with respect to each such program, the following:

(1) A description of the program.

(2) The number of veterans served by the program.

(3) The budget of the program.

(4) The number of full-time equivalent employees assigned to the program.

(5) Whether veterans may repeat participation in the program or participate in the program in addition to other similar programs.

(6) Any study results or research published regarding the efficacy of the program.

(7) Any other information the Secretary determines appropriate.

SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF INTERNET WEBSITE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Using funds made available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to publish the Internet websites of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary shall survey the existing Internet websites and information resources of the Department to publish an Internet website that serves as a centralized source to provide veterans with information regarding all of the mental health care services provided by the Secretary.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The Internet website published under subsection (a) shall provide to veterans information regarding all of the mental health care services available in the Veteran Integrated Service Network that the veteran is seeking such services, including, with respect to each medical center, Vet Center (as defined in section 1712A of title 38, United States Code), and community-based outpatient center in the Veterans Integrated Service Network—

(1) the name and contact information of each social work office;

(2) the name and contact information of each mental health clinic;

(3) a list of appropriate staff; and

(4) any other information the Secretary determines appropriate.

(c) UPDATED INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the information described in subsection (b) that is published on the Internet website under subsection (a) is updated not less than once every 90 days.

(d) OUTREACH.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall ensure that the outreach conducted under section 1720F(i) of title 38, United States Code, includes information regarding the Internet website published under subsection (a).

SEC. 4. PILOT PROGRAM FOR REPAYMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LOANS FOR CERTAIN PSYCHIATRISTS OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to repay loans of individuals described in subsection (b) that—

(1) were used by such individuals to finance education relating to psychiatric medicine, including education leading to—

(A) a degree of doctor of medicine; or

(B) a degree of doctor of osteopathy; and

(2) were obtained from any of the following:

(A) A governmental entity.

(B) A private financial institution.

(C) A school.

(D) Any other authorized entity as determined by the Secretary.

(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), an individual eligible for participation in the pilot program is an individual who—

(A) either—

(i) is licensed or eligible for licensure to practice psychiatric medicine in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs; or

(ii) is enrolled in the final year of a residency program leading to a specialty qualification in psychiatric medicine that is approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education; and

(B) demonstrates a commitment to a long-term career as a psychiatrist in the Veterans Health Administration, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) PROHIBITION ON SIMULTANEOUS ELIGIBILITY.—An individual who is participating in any other program of the Federal Government that repays the educational loans of the individual is not eligible to participate in the pilot program.

(c) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select not less than 10 individuals described in subsection (b) to participate in the pilot program for each year in which the Secretary carries out the pilot program.

(d) PERIOD OF OBLIGATED SERVICE.—The Secretary shall enter into an agreement with each individual selected under subsection (c) in which such individual agrees to serve a period of 2 or more years of obligated service for the Veterans Health Administration in the field of psychiatric medicine, as determined by the Secretary.

(e) LOAN REPAYMENTS.—