

S. 785 Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019

S. 785 is a landmark bipartisan bill and a comprehensive, aggressive approach to connect more Veterans with mental health services. Key sections of the bill include:

- Extends Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare eligibility to transitioning Veterans for a full year after their separation or discharge from the Armed Forces.
- Provides financial assistance to certain entities to provide and coordinate the provision of suicide prevention services for eligible individuals and their families.
- Updates clinical practice guidelines for assessment and management of patients at risk for suicide.
- Establishes Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense of Clinical practice guidelines for the treatment of serious mental illness.
- Conduct study on effectiveness of suicide prevention and mental health outreach programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Requires VA to create a staffing improvement plan for the hiring of mental health providers, including the number of positions and where those positions are located, that need to be filled in order to meet demand, and what regional-specific steps are being taken to address the shortages.
- Provides funding to expand existing or create new partnerships that increase the number of locations that VA telehealth care is available at a non-VA facility.

S. 2336 Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Reform Act

As the Department juggles ever increasing IT priorities, the bipartisan VA IT Reform Act will require VA to institute much needed reforms to its planning, management, and budgeting processes to improve the Department's transparency and operation.

S. 2864 Sergeant Daniel Somers Veterans Network Support Act of 2019

Establishes a pilot program to encourage members of the Armed Forces transitioning to civilian life to designate 10 people as a support network. This support network will be sent information about assistance and benefits programs. Sergeant Daniel Somers was an American soldier from Arizona who died by suicide in 2013.

S. 524 Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act of 2019

Focus on evolving issues to Tribes related to VA programs, communicate committee findings and recommendations to the Secretary. Provides guidance to the Secretary regarding issues relating to Tribal and Indian affairs. Facilitates, but not supplants, government-to-government consultation between the VA and its administrations, and tribes.

S. 2594 Veterans' Preference Parity Act

Modifies the eligibility criteria for certain Veterans to qualify for a preference in the federal hiring process. Specifically, an individual who is honorably discharged from active duty service is eligible for a Veterans' preference, if the active duty service was performed for more than 180 total days (currently, consecutive days). Additionally, a retired member of the Armed Forces is eligible for a Veterans' preference, even if the retiree (1) is not a disabled Veteran and (2) retired at or above the rank of major or its equivalent.

S. 850 Highly Rural Veteran Transportation Program Extension Act (Committee Print)

Directs VA to develop a national protocol for administering medical exams to volunteer drivers and directs GAO to study the effectiveness of the volunteer driver program operated by VA in conjunction with VSOs. Extends the authorization of funding for VA grants to Veterans service organizations for highly rural Veterans' transportation for medical care until 2021. Makes permanent VA's authority to transport individuals and eligible family members to or from VA facilities or other locations for the purpose of receiving care, vocational rehabilitation, or counseling. The current authority is set to expire on September 30, 2020.

S. 3110 Identifying Barriers and Best Practices Study Act of 2019

Requires a GAO study within 36 months on the disability and pension benefits provided to Guard and Reserve service members. The study will focus on the period between Jan 1, 2008 and December 31, 2018, and provide a comparison between the active and reserve components as it relates to percentage of each group of such Veterans with service-connected disabilities, and the number of Veterans in each group with each disability rating.

S. 123 Ensuring Quality Care for Our Veterans Act

Third party review of appointees in Veterans Health Administration who had a license terminated for cause and notice to individuals treated by those appointees if determined that an episode of care or services to which they received was below the standard of care.

S. 450 Veterans Improved Access and Care Act of 2019 (Committee Print)

Expansion of quarterly update of information on staffing and vacancies at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include information on duration of hiring process. Modifies MISSION Act Section 505 to require additional information when providing quarterly staffing and vacancy, broken out specifically for VA health care providers.

S. 3182 Helping Expand and Launch Transitional Health for Women Veterans Act

Continuation of women's health transition training pilot program of Department of Veterans Affairs. Requires VA to carry out the Women's Health Transition Training pilot program through at least fiscal year 2020.