

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1416

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand the capability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the medical-care needs of veterans in southern New Jersey.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 10, 2009

Mr. LOBIONDO (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. ANDREWS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand the capability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the medical-care needs of veterans in southern New Jersey.

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 “Southern New Jersey
5 Veterans Comprehensive Health Care Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; DEFINITION.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The current and future health-care needs of
2 veterans residing in the eight southern counties of
3 New Jersey are not being fully met by the Depart-
4 ment of Veterans Affairs.

5 (2) Travel times for southern New Jersey vet-
6 erans to existing Department of Veterans Affairs
7 health-care facilities in Pennsylvania and Delaware
8 fall within the Department of Veterans Affairs
9 health-planning criteria, but those criteria fail to
10 recognize that the area is largely rural and its road-
11 ways are congested, creating significant access bar-
12 riers to veterans in need of care and thereby result-
13 ing in suppressed demand for care.

14 (3) Projections of future growth in demand for
15 health care by veterans in southern New Jersey sup-
16 port sustainable enrollment of veterans needing De-
17 partment of Veterans Affairs health care.

18 (4) The number of veterans residing in south-
19 ern New Jersey is increasing as more veterans retire
20 in the area and new veterans seek services in the
21 wake of large-scale deployments of National Guard
22 and Reservists from the area. According to United
23 States census data, the veteran population in the
24 eight counties of southern New Jersey is greater
25 than 235,000.

1 (b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this Act, the term
2 “southern New Jersey” means the following counties of
3 the State of New Jersey: Ocean, Burlington, Camden,
4 Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Atlantic, and Cape May.

5 **SEC. 3. MEDICAL CARE FOR VETERANS IN SOUTHERN NEW**
6 **JERSEY.**

7 (a) DETERMINATION.—Not later than 90 days after
8 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
9 Veterans Affairs shall determine, and notify Congress pur-
10 suant to subsection (b), whether the needs of veterans in
11 southern New Jersey for full-service medical care shall be
12 met—

13 (1) through a project to provide inpatient and
14 outpatient services and long-term care to veterans at
15 an existing facility in southern New Jersey; or

16 (2) through a project for construction of a new
17 full-service Department of Veterans Affairs medical
18 center to provide inpatient and outpatient services
19 and long-term care to veterans with an appropriate
20 number of beds and services in southern New Jer-
21 sey.

22 (b) NOTIFICATION AND PROSPECTUS.—Not later
23 than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,
24 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress
25 a report—

1 (1) identifying which of the two options speci-
2 fied in subsection (a) has been selected by the Sec-
3 retary; and

4 (2) providing, for the option selected, a pro-
5 spectus that includes, at a minimum, the matter
6 specified in paragraphs (1) through (8) of section
7 8104(b) of title 38, United States Code, and the
8 project time lines.

9 **SEC. 4. EXISTING FACILITY OPTION FOR MEDICAL CARE**
10 **FOR VETERANS IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY.**

11 (a) PROJECT.—If the option selected by the Sec-
12 retary of Veterans Affairs under section 3(a) is the option
13 specified in paragraph (1) of that section for a project to
14 provide inpatient and outpatient services and long-term
15 care to veterans at an existing facility in southern New
16 Jersey, then the Secretary shall, subject to the availability
17 of appropriations for such purpose, take such steps as nec-
18 essary to enter into an agreement with an appropriate pri-
19 vate-sector entity to provide for such services and care for
20 veterans at an existing facility in southern New Jersey.
21 Such an agreement may include provision for construction
22 of a new wing or other addition at such facility to provide
23 additional services that will, under the agreement, be
24 leased by the United States and dedicated to care and

1 treatment of veterans by the Secretary under title 38,
2 United States Code.

3 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
4 authorized to be appropriated such sums as necessary for
5 a public-private venture project under this section.

6 **SEC. 5. NEW DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MED-**
7 **ICAL CENTER, SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY.**

8 (a) PROJECT AUTHORIZATION.—If the option se-
9 lected by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section
10 3(a) is the option specified in paragraph (2) of that section
11 for a project for construction of a new full-service Depart-
12 ment of Veterans Affairs medical center providing inpa-
13 tient and outpatient services and long-term care to vet-
14 erans with an appropriate number of beds in southern
15 New Jersey, then the Secretary shall, subject to the avail-
16 ability of appropriations for such purpose, carry out a
17 major medical facility construction project for construc-
18 tion in southern New Jersey of such a medical facility.
19 Such facility shall be located in the county in southern
20 New Jersey that the Secretary determines most suitable
21 to meet the health-care needs of veterans in the region.

22 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to the Construction, Major
24 Projects account of the Department of Veterans Affairs,
25 in addition to any other amounts authorized for that ac-

- 1 count, such sums as necessary to complete the project au-
- 2 thorized by subsection (a).

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