

Union Calendar No. 175

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1443

[Report No. 113-247]

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recognize tinnitus as a mandatory condition for research and treatment by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 9, 2013

Mr. MICHAUD introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

OCTOBER 22, 2013

Additional sponsors: Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. MCGOVERN

OCTOBER 22, 2013

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recognize tinnitus as a mandatory condition for research and treatment by the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 “Tinnitus Research and
5 Treatment Act of 2013”.

6 **SEC. 2. RECOGNITION AND TREATMENT OF TINNITUS AT**
7 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AUDI-**
8 **TORY CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.**

9 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall recognize
10 tinnitus as a mandatory condition for research and treat-
11 ment by the Department of Veterans Affairs Auditory
12 Centers of Excellence.

13 **SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF**
14 **TINNITUS.**

15 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that
16 research is conducted at Department of Veterans Affairs
17 facilities on the prevention and treatment of tinnitus. Such
18 research shall include—

19 (1) an assessment of the efficacy of multidisci-
20 plinary tinnitus treatment modalities on different
21 subsets of patients;

22 (2) studies on the underlying etiology of
23 tinnitus in veteran populations that occur as a result
24 of different causal factors, including blast-related
25 tinnitus where there is no measurable hearing loss

1 versus other forms of noise-induced tinnitus where
2 there is hearing loss; and

3 ~~(3) a study of the underlying mechanisms be-~~
4 ~~tween hearing loss and tinnitus, including cases in~~
5 ~~which one or the other condition is present, but not~~
6 ~~both.~~

7 **SEC. 4. INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION.**

8 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure the
9 cooperation of the Department of Veterans Affairs with
10 the Hearing Center of Excellence established by the De-
11 partment of Defense to further research on tinnitus.

12 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

13 *This Act may be cited as the “Tinnitus Research and*
14 *Treatment Act of 2013”.*

15 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

16 *Congress makes the following findings:*

17 *(1) Since 2006, the most prevalent service-con-*
18 *nected disability for which veterans have received*
19 *compensation under the laws administered by the*
20 *Secretary of Veterans Affairs has been tinnitus.*

21 *(2) The number of veterans receiving such com-*
22 *penetration for tinnitus has risen each year since 2006,*
23 *increasing the number and cost of the compensation*
24 *claims paid by the Secretary.*

1 (3) *A growing body of peer reviewed literature*
2 *indicates a direct connection between traumatic brain*
3 *injury, post traumatic stress disorder, and tinnitus.*

4 (4) *An analysis of data collected by the Depart-*
5 *ment of Veterans Affairs concluded that total amount*
6 *of disability compensation paid for tinnitus by the*
7 *Department of Veterans Affairs in 2012 was*
8 *\$1,500,000,000.*

9 (5) *Based on projected rates of growth, the*
10 *amount of disability compensation payable to vet-*
11 *erans for tinnitus is expected to exceed \$3,000,000,000*
12 *in 2017.*

13 **SEC. 3. RECOGNITION AND TREATMENT OF TINNITUS AT**
14 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AUDI-**
15 **TORY CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.**

16 *The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall recognize*
17 *tinnitus as a condition for research and treatment by the*
18 *Department of Veterans Affairs Auditory Centers of Excel-*
19 *lence.*

20 **SEC. 4. RESEARCH ON PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF**
21 **TINNITUS.**

22 (a) *IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs*
23 *shall recognize the need to enhance the research and treat-*
24 *ment of tinnitus and to ensure the allocation of appropriate*
25 *resources directed at the research and enhanced treatment*

1 of tinnitus conducted by the Auditory Centers of Excellence
2 of the Department of Veterans Affairs, commensurate with
3 peer-review protocols. Such research shall include—

4 (1) an assessment of the efficacy of multidisci-
5 plinary tinnitus treatment modalities on different
6 subsets of patients;

7 (2) studies on the underlying etiology of tinnitus
8 in veteran populations that occur as a result of dif-
9 ferent causal factors, including blast-related tinnitus
10 where there is no measurable hearing loss versus other
11 forms of noise-induced tinnitus where there is hearing
12 loss; and

13 (3) a study of the underlying mechanisms be-
14 tween hearing loss and tinnitus, including cases in
15 which one or the other condition is present, but not
16 both.

17 (b) *RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER AUTHORITIES.*—Noth-
18 ing in this section shall be construed as interfering with
19 the discretion of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct
20 research in accordance with peer-review protocols in order
21 to ensure the quality and transparency of the research.

22 **SEC. 5. INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION.**

23 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure the co-
24 operation of the Department of Veterans Affairs with the

- 1 *Hearing Center of Excellence established by the Department*
- 2 *of Defense to further research on tinnitus.*

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