

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 10

To improve the workforce of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 23 (legislative day, JANUARY 3), 2023

Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To improve the workforce of 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “VA Clinician Appreciation, Recruitment, Education, Ex-
6 pansion, and Retention Support (CAREERS) Act of
7 2023”.

8 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
9 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—TRAINING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION OF
HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES

- Sec. 101. Payment of licensure exam costs for recipients of scholarships from Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 102. Improvement of workforce training and team models to meet the needs of older veterans.
- Sec. 103. Study on improving recruitment and retention at community living centers of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 104. Limitation on detail of directors of medical centers of Department of Veterans Affairs to different positions.

TITLE II—ACCOUNTABILITY, OVERSIGHT, AND PERSONNEL
MATTERS

Subtitle A—Matters Relating to Pay

- Sec. 201. Modification of pay limitation for physicians, podiatrists, optometrists, and dentists of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 202. Increased pay cap for directors of medical centers and Veterans Integrated Service Networks of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 203. Waiver of pay limitation for employees of the Veterans Health Administration performing mission critical work.
- Sec. 204. Increase of maximum amount of incentive pay for Department pharmacist executives.
- Sec. 205. Modification of special pay authority for nurse executives.

Subtitle B—Improvement of Recruitment and Hiring

- Sec. 211. Oversight of direct hire authority and hiring flexibility of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 212. Waiver of certain licensure requirements.

Subtitle C—Other Personnel Matters

- Sec. 221. Role of optometrists in Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 222. Expansion of annual leave options for employees of Department of Veterans Affairs during public health emergency.
- Sec. 223. Expansion of reimbursement of continuing professional education expenses.
- Sec. 224. Inclusion of police officers of Department of Veterans Affairs as law enforcement officers.
- Sec. 225. Department of Veterans Affairs personnel transparency.
- Sec. 226. Comptroller General report assessing human resources modernization within Veterans Health Administration.

1 **TITLE I—TRAINING, RECRUIT-**
2 **MENT, AND RETENTION OF**
3 **HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES**

4 **SEC. 101. PAYMENT OF LICENSURE EXAM COSTS FOR RE-**
5 **CIPIENTS OF SCHOLARSHIPS FROM DEPART-**
6 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
8 shall pay the costs of any licensing examinations and cer-
9 tifications required by the Secretary for any current recipi-
10 ent of a covered health professional scholarship from the
11 Department of Veterans Affairs.

12 (b) LICENSING EXAMINATIONS AND CERTIFI-
13 CATIONS.—Subsection (a) shall apply to the payment of
14 costs for—

15 (1) the United States Medical Licensing Exam-
16 ination Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3;

17 (2) the National Council Licensure Exam;

18 (3) the National Board Dental Examination;

19 (4) the National Board Dental Hygiene Exam-
20 ination;

21 (5) the Dental Licensure Objective Structured
22 Clinical Examination and Integrated National Board
23 Dental Examination;

1 (6) the National Licensing Exams for Reg-
2 istered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Certified
3 Registered Nurse Anesthetists;

4 (7) the American Podiatric Medical Licensing
5 Exam;

6 (8) the National Board of Examiners in Optom-
7 etry Exam;

8 (9) the Physician Assistant National Certifi-
9 cation Exam;

10 (10) the Examination for Professional Practice
11 in Psychology;

12 (11) the Academy for Certification of Vision
13 Rehabilitation and Education Professionals certifi-
14 cation examinations;

15 (12) the Association of Social Workers Boards
16 Exam; and

17 (13) such other licensing examinations and cer-
18 tifications as the Secretary considers appropriate.

19 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year
20 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less
21 frequently than annually thereafter, the Secretary shall
22 submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Sen-
23 ate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House
24 of Representatives a report on the implementation of this
25 section that includes the following data for each State and

1 territory of the United States for the one-year period pre-
2 ceding the date of the report:

3 (1) Utilization by the Secretary of the require-
4 ment under subsection (a) broken down by position
5 and career type.

6 (2) Number of times each examination or cer-
7 tification described in subsection (b) was paid for by
8 the Department and total funds expended by the
9 Department for each such examination or certifi-
10 cation.

11 (d) COVERED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP
12 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered health pro-
13 fessional scholarship” means—

14 (1) the Department of Veterans Affairs Health
15 Professional Scholarship Program under subchapter
16 II of chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code;

17 (2) the Department of Veterans Affairs Em-
18 ployee Incentive Scholarship Program under sub-
19 chapter VI of such chapter, including—

20 (A) the National Nursing Education Initia-
21 tive; and

22 (B) the VA National Education for Em-
23 ployees Program;

1 (3) the Department of Veterans Affairs Read-
2 justment Counseling Service Scholarship Program
3 under subchapter IX of such chapter;

4 (4) the Visual Impairment and Orientation and
5 Mobility Professionals Scholarship Program under
6 chapter 75 of such title;

7 (5) the Veterans Healing Veterans Medical Ac-
8 cess and Scholarship Program under section 304 of
9 the VA MISSION Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–
10 182; 38 U.S.C. 7601 note);

11 (6) the Physician Assistant Education and
12 Training Pilot Program for Former Members of The
13 Armed Forces under section 246 of division J of the
14 Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (Public
15 Law 115–141; 38 U.S.C. 7601 note); and

16 (7) such other programs as the Secretary con-
17 siders appropriate.

18 **SEC. 102. IMPROVEMENT OF WORKFORCE TRAINING AND**
19 **TEAM MODELS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF**
20 **OLDER VETERANS.**

21 (a) RURAL GERIATRICS TEAM TRAINING.—The Sec-
22 retary of Veterans Affairs shall expand the Rural Inter-
23 disciplinary Team Training program of the Department
24 of Veterans Affairs to not fewer than one rural site in
25 each Veterans Integrated Service Network of the Depart-

1 ment and ensure access at such sites to learning opportu-
2 nities through the Geriatric Scholars Program of the De-
3 partment.

4 (b) TRAINING ON CARING FOR VETERANS WITH
5 MEMORY LOSS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide
7 continuing professional education for clinical staff of
8 the Department who provide care for veterans with
9 Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

10 (2) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall
11 implement the continuing professional education re-
12 quired under paragraph (1) in consultation with the
13 Office of Rural Health of the Department of Vet-
14 erans Affairs established under section 7308 of title
15 38, United States Code, in order to ensure equitable
16 access to learning opportunities for employees of the
17 Department in rural and highly rural areas.

18 (c) EXPANSION OF GERIATRIC PATIENT ALIGNED
19 CARE TEAM MODEL AND GERIATRIC AND PALLIATIVE
20 SPECIALTY SERVICES.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall expand
22 the Geriatrics Patient Aligned Care Team model and
23 the geriatric and palliative specialty services of the
24 Department of Veterans Affairs—

1 (A) to every medical center of the Depart-
2 ment;

3 (B) to any community-based outpatient
4 clinic at which such expansion is determined by
5 the Secretary to be feasible and needed; and

6 (C) to provide access to all veterans that
7 need those services, including through imple-
8 menting Geriatric and Palliative Specialty Con-
9 sultative Clinical Resource Hubs to meet the
10 needs of the aging veteran population.

11 (2) WAIVER OF EXPANSION TO MEDICAL CEN-
12 TERS.—The Secretary may waive the application of
13 the requirements under paragraph (1)(A) with re-
14 spect to a medical center if the Secretary determines
15 that the medical center does not have the capacity
16 or need to implement a Geriatrics Patient Aligned
17 Care Team model or to provide geriatric and pallia-
18 tive specialty services, as the case may be.

19 (3) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct a
20 study on the variations in the structure and model
21 consistency of the Geriatrics Patient Aligned Care
22 Team model and delivery and utilization of geriatric
23 and palliative care throughout the Department and
24 how those variations impact quality of care and pa-
25 tient outcomes.

1 (d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years
3 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not
4 less frequently than annually thereafter for the fol-
5 lowing five years, the Secretary shall submit to the
6 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and
7 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
8 Representatives a report on the implementation of
9 this section.

10 (2) INCLUSION OF INFORMATION ON WAIV-
11 ERS.—The Secretary shall include in the report re-
12 quired by paragraph (1) an identification of any
13 medical center of the Department in receipt of a
14 waiver under subsection (c)(2) and the reason for
15 the waiver.

16 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms “rural”
17 and “highly rural” have the meanings given those terms
18 under the Rural-Urban Commuting Areas (RUCA) coding
19 system of the Department of Agriculture.

20 **SEC. 103. STUDY ON IMPROVING RECRUITMENT AND RE-**
21 **TENTION AT COMMUNITY LIVING CENTERS**
22 **OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the
24 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
25 erans Affairs shall complete a study on barriers to hiring

1 and retaining staff at community living centers of the De-
 2 partment of Veterans Affairs and best practices for im-
 3 proving recruitment and retention of such staff, with an
 4 emphasis on nursing staff.

5 (b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days
 6 after completion of the study under subsection (a), the
 7 Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Af-
 8 fairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Af-
 9 fairs of the House of Representatives a report—

10 (1) summarizing key findings with respect to
 11 barriers to hiring and retaining staff at community
 12 living centers of the Department and best practices
 13 for improving recruitment and retention of such
 14 staff, including any barriers or best practices specific
 15 to rural areas; and

16 (2) including recommendations for such admin-
 17 istrative action as the Secretary considers appro-
 18 priate.

19 **SEC. 104. LIMITATION ON DETAIL OF DIRECTORS OF MED-**
 20 **ICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
 21 **ERANS AFFAIRS TO DIFFERENT POSITIONS.**

22 (a) NOTIFICATION.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
 24 detailing a director of a medical center of the De-
 25 partment of Veterans Affairs to a different position

1 within the Department, the Secretary of Veterans
2 Affairs shall notify the Committee on Veterans' Af-
3 fairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans'
4 Affairs of the House of Representatives of such de-
5 tail.

6 (2) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The notifica-
7 tion required by paragraph (1) shall include, with re-
8 spect to a director of a medical center who is de-
9 tailed to a different position within the Department,
10 the following information:

11 (A) The location at which the director is
12 detailed.

13 (B) The position title of the detail.

14 (C) The estimated time the director is ex-
15 pected to be absent from their duties at the
16 medical center.

17 (D) Such other information as the Sec-
18 retary may determine appropriate.

19 (b) APPOINTMENT OF ACTING DIRECTOR.—Not later
20 than 120 days after detailing a director of a medical cen-
21 ter of the Department to a different position within the
22 Department, the Secretary shall appoint an individual as
23 acting director of such medical center with all of the au-
24 thority and responsibilities of the detailed director.

1 (c) UPDATE ON DETAIL.—Not later than 120 days
2 after detailing a director of a medical center of the De-
3 partment to a different position within the Department,
4 and not less frequently than every 30 days thereafter while
5 the detail is in effect or while the director position at the
6 medical center is vacant, the Secretary shall submit to the
7 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the
8 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
9 resentatives an update regarding the status of the detail.

10 (d) RETURN TO POSITION OR REASSIGNMENT.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
12 graph (2), not later than 180 days after detailing a
13 director of a medical center of the Department to a
14 different position within the Department, for a rea-
15 son other than an ongoing investigation or adminis-
16 trative action with respect to the director, the Sec-
17 retary shall—

18 (A) return the individual to the position as
19 director of the medical center; or

20 (B) reassign the individual from the posi-
21 tion as director of the medical center and begin
22 the process of hiring a new director for such po-
23 sition.

24 (2) WAIVER.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
 2 waive the requirement under paragraph (1)
 3 with respect to an individual for successive 90-
 4 day increments for a total period of not more
 5 than 540 days from the original date the indi-
 6 vidual was detailed away from their position as
 7 director of a medical center.

8 (B) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 30
 9 days after exercising a waiver under subpara-
 10 graph (A), the Secretary shall notify Congress
 11 of the waiver and provide to Congress informa-
 12 tion as to why the waiver is necessary.

13 **TITLE II—ACCOUNTABILITY,**
 14 **OVERSIGHT, AND PERSONNEL**
 15 **MATTERS**

16 **Subtitle A—Matters Relating to**
 17 **Pay**

18 **SEC. 201. MODIFICATION OF PAY LIMITATION FOR PHYSI-**
 19 **CIANS, PODIATRISTS, OPTOMETRISTS, AND**
 20 **DENTISTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
 21 **AFFAIRS.**

22 (a) MARKET PAY.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 7431 of title 38,
 24 United States Code, is amended—

1 (A) by striking subsections (a), (b), and
2 (d);

3 (B) by redesignating subsections (c), (e),
4 (f), (g), and (h) as subsections (a), (b), (c), (d),
5 and (e), respectively;

6 (C) by inserting “optometrists,” after “po-
7 diatrists,” each place it appears;

8 (D) by inserting “optometrist” after “podi-
9 atrist,” each place it appears;

10 (E) in subsection (a), as redesignated by
11 subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding
12 paragraph (1), by striking “One element of pay
13 for physicians, podiatrists, and dentists shall be
14 base pay. Base pay shall meet the following re-
15 quirements:” and inserting “Pay of physicians,
16 podiatrists, optometrists, and dentists in the
17 Veterans Health Administration shall consist of
18 base pay, which shall meet the following re-
19 quirements:”;

20 (F) in subsection (b), as so redesignated—

21 (i) in the subsection heading, by strik-
22 ing “TOTAL” and inserting “MARKET”;

23 (ii) in paragraph (1)(A)—

1 (I) by striking “annual” each
2 place it appears and inserting “mar-
3 ket”; and

4 (II) by inserting “, optom-
5 etrists,” after “podiatrists”;

6 (iii) by striking paragraphs (2) and
7 (3);

8 (iv) by redesignating paragraph (4) as
9 paragraph (2);

10 (v) in paragraph (2), as redesignated
11 by clause (iv), by striking “Except as pro-
12 vided in sections 7404A(c) and 7410(a)(2)
13 of this title, in no case may the total
14 amount of compensation” and inserting
15 “The total amount of market pay under
16 subsection (a)”;

17 (vi) by inserting “may not” before
18 “exceed”; and

19 (vii) by adding at the end the fol-
20 lowing new paragraphs:

21 “(3) Notwithstanding any compensation or pay limi-
22 tations under this title or title 5, the Secretary may au-
23 thorize the Under Secretary for Health to pay physicians,
24 podiatrists, and dentists—

25 “(A) awards authorized under this title;

1 “(B) advance payments, recruitment or reloca-
2 tion bonuses, and retention allowances authorized
3 under section 7410(a) of this title or as otherwise
4 provided by law;

5 “(C) incentives or bonuses under section 706 of
6 this title or as otherwise provided by law; and

7 “(D) earnings from fee-basis appointments
8 under section 7405(a)(2) of this title.

9 “(4)(A) The Secretary may waive any pay limitation
10 described in this section (to include tier limitations) if the
11 Secretary determines it is necessary for the recruitment
12 or retention of critical health care personnel, as deter-
13 mined by the Secretary.

14 “(B) The Secretary may prescribe requirements, limi-
15 tations, and other considerations for waivers under sub-
16 paragraph (A).”;

17 (G) in subsection (e), as so redesignated,
18 by striking “subsections (b) and (c) of”;

19 (H) in subsection (d), as so redesignated—

20 (i) in paragraph (1), by striking “sub-
21 section (c)” and inserting “subsection (a)”;

22 and

23 (ii) by adding at the end the following
24 new paragraph:

1 “(3) An individual receiving market pay under sub-
2 section (a) may not receive a non-foreign cost of living
3 allowance under section 5941 of title 5.”; and

4 (I) in subsection (e), as so redesignated, by
5 striking “subsection (c), (d), or (e) except for
6 the responsibilities of the Secretary under sub-
7 section (e)(1)” and inserting “subsections (a)
8 or (b) except for the responsibilities of the Sec-
9 retary under subsection (b)(1)”.

10 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

11 (A) INCENTIVES FOR RECRUITMENT.—Sec-
12 tion 706(d)(6) of title 38, United States Code,
13 is amended by striking “total amount of com-
14 pensation under section 7431(e)(4)” and insert-
15 ing “total amount of market pay under section
16 7431”.

17 (B) AWARDS.—Section 7404A(e) of such
18 title is amended by striking “the limitation
19 under section 7431(e)(4)” and inserting “a lim-
20 itation under section 7431”.

21 (C) ADDITIONAL PAY AUTHORITIES.—Sec-
22 tion 7410(a)(2) of such title is amended by
23 striking “the limitation under section
24 7431(e)(4)” and inserting “a limitation under
25 section 7431”.

1 (D) PAY OF UNDER SECRETARY FOR
2 HEALTH.—Section 7432(b)(1) of such title is
3 amended—

4 (i) by inserting “, podiatrist, optom-
5 etrist,” after “physician”; and

6 (ii) by striking “7431(c)” and insert-
7 ing “7431”.

8 (E) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—Section
9 7433 of such title is amended by inserting “op-
10 tometrists,” after “physicians,” each place it
11 appears.

12 (F) COMPETITIVE PAY.—Section
13 7451(a)(2)(C) of such title is amended by in-
14 serting “optometrist,” after “physician,”.

15 (G) COMPENSATION AND PROFESSIONAL
16 STANDARDS FOR CERTAIN MEDICAL OFFI-
17 CERS.—Section 27(b) of the Central Intel-
18 ligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C.
19 3528(b)) is amended by striking “section
20 7431(e)(1)(C)” and inserting “section
21 7431(b)(1)(C)”.

22 (3) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

23 (A) SECTION HEADING.—

1 (i) IN GENERAL.—The heading for
 2 section 7431 of title 38, United States
 3 Code is amended to read as follows:

4 **“§ 7431. Market pay”.**

5 (ii) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table
 6 of sections at the beginning of subchapter
 7 III of chapter 74 of title 38, United States
 8 Code, is amended by striking the item re-
 9 lating to section 7431 and inserting the
 10 following new item:

“7431. Market pay.”.

11 (B) SUBCHAPTER HEADING.—

12 (i) IN GENERAL.—The heading for
 13 subchapter III of chapter 74 of such title
 14 is amended to read as follows:

15 **“Subchapter III—Pay for Physicians and**
 16 **Other Health-care Personnel”.**

17 (ii) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table
 18 of sections at the beginning of chapter 74
 19 of such title is amended by striking the
 20 item relating to subchapter III and insert-
 21 ing the following new item:

“SUBCHAPTER III—PAY FOR PHYSICIANS AND OTHER HEALTH-CARE
 PERSONNEL”.

22 (4) APPLICATION.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made
 2 by this subsection shall apply to any pay period
 3 of the Department of Veterans Affairs begin-
 4 ning on or after the date that is 30 days after
 5 the date of the enactment of this Act.

6 (B) PERFORMANCE PAY FOR YEAR OF EN-
 7 ACTMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
 8 may pay performance pay under section
 9 7431(d) of title 38, United States Code, as in
 10 effect on the day before the date of the enact-
 11 ment of this Act, for the calendar year in which
 12 this Act is enacted.

13 (b) MODIFICATION AND CLARIFICATION OF PAY
 14 GRADE FOR OPTOMETRISTS.—Section 7404 of such title
 15 is amended—

16 (1) in subsection (a)(2)(A), by striking “podia-
 17 trists, and dentists” and inserting “podiatrists, op-
 18 tometrists, and dentists”; and

19 (2) in the list in subsection (b)—

20 (A) by striking “PODLATRIST (DPM),
 21 AND DENTIST” and inserting “PODIA-
 22 TRIST (DPM), OPTOMETRIST (OD), AND
 23 DENTIST”; and

24 (B) by striking “CLINICAL CHIRO-
 25 PRACTOR AND OPTOMETRIST SCHED-

1 ULE,” and inserting “CLINICAL CHIRO-
2 PRACTOR SCHEDULE”.

3 (c) RETROACTIVE AUTHORITY FOR COMPENSA-
4 TION.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
6 Affairs is retroactively authorized to pay to a cov-
7 ered employee the amount of compensation that was
8 authorized to be paid to the employee during the pe-
9 riod specified in paragraph (2) but was deferred and
10 paid to the employee in the calendar year following
11 the calendar year in which it was authorized to be
12 paid because it exceeded \$400,000 in a calendar
13 year.

14 (2) PERIOD SPECIFIED.—The period specified
15 in this paragraph is the period beginning on Janu-
16 ary 8, 2006, and ending on December 31, 2017.

17 (3) ADDITIONAL PERIOD.—Compensation au-
18 thorized under this subsection shall not be included
19 in the calculation of any aggregate limit on com-
20 pensation for a covered employee for the year in
21 which it is paid.

22 (4) CHARGING OF COMPENSATION.—Compensa-
23 tion authorized under this subsection shall be
24 charged to the appropriate medical care appropria-
25 tion account of the Department of Veterans Affairs

1 for the fiscal year in which the work was performed
2 except as follows:

3 (A) In the case of an account that has
4 closed pursuant to section 1552 of title 31,
5 United States Code, the compensation shall be
6 charged to a current appropriation account in
7 accordance with section 1553 of such title.

8 (B) In the case of an expired account that
9 has not closed, if charging the compensation to
10 the expired account would cause such account
11 to have a negative unliquidated or unexpended
12 balance, the compensation may be charged to a
13 current appropriation account available for the
14 same purpose.

15 (5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

16 (A) COMPENSATION.—The term “com-
17 pensation” means any pay, including salary,
18 awards, and incentives.

19 (B) COVERED EMPLOYEE.—The term
20 “covered employee” means a physician, podia-
21 trist, optometrist, or dentist subject to market
22 pay under section 7431 of title 38, United
23 States Code, as amended by subsection (a).

1 **SEC. 202. INCREASED PAY CAP FOR DIRECTORS OF MED-**
2 **ICAL CENTERS AND VETERANS INTEGRATED**
3 **SERVICE NETWORKS OF DEPARTMENT OF**
4 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) INCREASED PAY CAP.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 74
7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by add-
8 ing at the end the following new section:

9 **“§ 7414. Pay for directors of medical centers and di-**
10 **rectors of Veterans Integrated Service**
11 **Networks**

12 “(a) IN GENERAL.—To reflect the recruitment and
13 retention needs of the Department for the assignment of
14 a particular director in a medical center or Veterans Inte-
15 grated Service Network of the Department, the Secretary
16 shall prescribe a system of pay for individuals appointed
17 under section 7401(4) of this title.

18 “(b) MARKET PAY.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The annual amount of the
20 market rate of pay of an individual appointed under
21 section 7401(4) of this title—

22 “(A) shall be determined by the Secretary
23 on a case-by-case basis; and

24 “(B) shall take into account—

25 “(i) the level of experience of the indi-
26 vidual in managing facilities or programs

1 of the Department or other similar agen-
2 cies or companies, whether governmental
3 or nongovernmental;

4 “(ii) the complexity of the assignment
5 of the individual, whether assigned or to be
6 assigned;

7 “(iii) the labor market for individuals
8 in similar positions, which may cover any
9 geographic area the Secretary considers
10 appropriate;

11 “(iv) the experience of the individual
12 in performing the assignment of the indi-
13 vidual, whether assigned or to be assigned;
14 and

15 “(v) such other considerations as the
16 Secretary considers appropriate.

17 “(2) EVALUATION AND ADJUSTMENT.—

18 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The market rate of
19 pay provided under this subsection shall be
20 evaluated by the Secretary not less frequently
21 than once every two years.

22 “(B) ADJUSTMENT.—The market rate of
23 pay of an individual may be adjusted as the re-
24 sult of an evaluation under subparagraph (A).

1 “(C) NOTICE OF RESULTS.—An individual
2 whose market rate of pay is evaluated under
3 subparagraph (A) shall receive written notice of
4 the results of such evaluation.

5 “(c) REQUIREMENTS AND LIMITATIONS ON TOTAL
6 PAY.—

7 “(1) MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AMOUNTS.—

8 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently
9 than once every two years, the Secretary shall
10 prescribe for applicability throughout the De-
11 partment the minimum and maximum amounts
12 for a market rate of pay that may be paid
13 under subsection (b).

14 “(B) PUBLICATION AND EFFECTIVE DATE
15 OF AMOUNTS.—Amounts prescribed under sub-
16 paragraph (A) shall be published in the Federal
17 Register and shall take effect not earlier than
18 60 days after the date of publication.

19 “(C) MAXIMUM.—

20 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as pro-
21 vided in clause (ii), in no case may the
22 total market rate of pay provided under
23 subsection (b) exceed the amount of annual
24 compensation (excluding expenses) speci-
25 fied in section 102 of title 3.

1 “(ii) WAIVER.—The Secretary may
2 waive the limitation under clause (i) (to in-
3 clude tier limitations) if the Secretary de-
4 termines it is necessary for the recruitment
5 or retention of critical health care per-
6 sonnel, as determined by the Secretary.

7 “(2) LIMITATION ON REDUCTION.—No adjust-
8 ment of the market rate of pay under subsection
9 (b)(2)(B) may result in a reduction of the amount
10 of the market rate of pay of an individual while in
11 the same position or assignment at the same loca-
12 tion.

13 “(d) TREATMENT OF PAY.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Pay under subsection (b)
15 shall be considered pay for all purposes, including
16 retirement benefits under chapters 83 and 84 of title
17 5 and other benefits.

18 “(2) COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCE.—An indi-
19 vidual receiving pay under subsection (b) may not
20 receive a cost-of-living allowance under section 5941
21 of title 5.

22 “(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year
23 after the date of the enactment of the VA Clinician Appre-
24 ciation, Recruitment, Education, Expansion, and Reten-
25 tion Support (CAREERS) Act of 2023, and annually

1 thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee
 2 on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on
 3 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report
 4 on the implementation by the Secretary of the require-
 5 ments under this section.”.

6 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
 7 tions at the beginning of such subchapter is amend-
 8 ed by inserting after the item relating to section
 9 7413 the following new item:

“7414. Pay for directors of medical centers and directors of Veterans Integrated
 Service Networks.”.

10 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section
 11 7404(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

12 (1) in subparagraph (A)—

13 (A) by striking “(A) The annual” and in-
 14 serting “The annual”; and

15 (B) by striking “and 7401(4)”; and

16 (2) by striking subparagraph (B).

17 **SEC. 203. WAIVER OF PAY LIMITATION FOR EMPLOYEES OF**
 18 **THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**
 19 **PERFORMING MISSION CRITICAL WORK.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 74 of title
 21 38, United States Code, as amended by section 202(a)(1),
 22 is further amended by adding at the end the following new
 23 section:

1 **“§ 7415. Waiver of pay limitation for employees per-**
 2 **forming mission critical work**

3 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other pro-
 4 vision of law, the Secretary may waive any limitation on
 5 pay for an employee of the Veterans Health Administra-
 6 tion who is performing mission critical work.

7 “(b) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary shall prescribe reg-
 8 ulations for the administration of this section.

9 “(c) EMPLOYEE OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMIN-
 10 ISTRATION DEFINED.—In this section, the term “em-
 11 ployee of the Veterans Health Administration’ includes
 12 any employee of the Veterans Health Administration, re-
 13 gardless of the authority under which the employee was
 14 hired.”.

15 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 16 at the beginning of such subchapter, as amended by sec-
 17 tion 202(a)(2), is further amended by inserting after the
 18 item relating to section 7414 the following new item:

“7415. Waiver of pay limitation for employees performing mission critical
 work.”.

19 **SEC. 204. INCREASE OF MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF INCENTIVE**
 20 **PAY FOR DEPARTMENT PHARMACIST EXECU-**
 21 **TIVES.**

22 Section 7410(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code,
 23 is amended by striking “\$40,000” and inserting
 24 “\$100,000”.

1 **SEC. 205. MODIFICATION OF SPECIAL PAY AUTHORITY FOR**
 2 **NURSE EXECUTIVES.**

3 Section 7452(g) of title 38, United States Code, is
 4 amended—

5 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “Department
 6 nurse executives, the Secretary may, in accordance
 7 with” and all that follows through the period at the
 8 end and inserting “nurse executives for the Veterans
 9 Health Administration, the Under Secretary for
 10 Health may pay special pay to personnel of the Vet-
 11 erans Health Administration who are nurse execu-
 12 tives.”; and

13 (2) by adding at the end the following new
 14 paragraph:

15 “(5) The Under Secretary for Health shall define
 16 through regulations which positions of the Veterans
 17 Health Administration qualify as nurse executives for pur-
 18 poses of special pay under paragraph (1).”.

19 **Subtitle B—Improvement of**
 20 **Recruitment and Hiring**

21 **SEC. 211. OVERSIGHT OF DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY AND**
 22 **HIRING FLEXIBILITY OF DEPARTMENT OF**
 23 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

24 Not later than three years after the date of the enact-
 25 ment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department

1 of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study and publish a
2 report on—

3 (1) the use of direct hire authority by the De-
4 partment;

5 (2) the contributions made by the use of such
6 authority to filling vacancies within the Department;
7 and

8 (3) any vulnerabilities or inconsistencies with
9 respect to the use of such authority.

10 **SEC. 212. WAIVER OF CERTAIN LICENSURE REQUIRE-**
11 **MENTS.**

12 (a) **PSYCHOLOGISTS.**—Paragraph (8)(C) of section
13 7402(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

14 (1) by striking “individual psychologist for a
15 period” and inserting “individual psychologist—

16 “(i) for a period”;

17 (2) by striking the period at the end and insert-
18 ing “; or”; and

19 (3) by adding at the end the following new
20 clause:

21 “(ii) for a reasonable period recommended
22 by the Under Secretary for Health, not to ex-
23 ceed four years, during a public health emer-
24 gency declared by the President, the Secretary

1 of Health and Human Services, or such other
2 authority as specified by the Secretary.”.

3 (b) LICENSED PROFESSIONAL MENTAL HEALTH
4 COUNSELOR.—Paragraph (11)(B) of such section is
5 amended by striking the period at the end and inserting
6 “, except that the Secretary may waive the requirement
7 of licensure or certification for an individual professional
8 mental health counselor for a reasonable period of time
9 recommended by the Under Secretary for Health.”.

10 **Subtitle C—Other Personnel** 11 **Matters**

12 **SEC. 221. ROLE OF OPTOMETRISTS IN DEPARTMENT OF** 13 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

14 (a) INCLUSION AS PHYSICIAN.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 7413 of title 38,
16 United States Code, is amended—

17 (A) in the section heading, by inserting
18 **“and optometrists”** after **“podiatrists”**;

19 (B) in subsection (a)—

20 (i) by striking “a doctor of podiatric
21 medicine who is appointed as a podiatrist
22 under section 7401(1) of this title” and in-
23 serting “a covered individual”; and

24 (ii) by striking “such section” and in-
25 serting “section 7401(1) of this title”; and

1 (C) by adding at the end the following new
2 subsection:

3 “(c) COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In this sec-
4 tion, the term ‘covered individual’ means any of the fol-
5 lowing:

6 “(1) A doctor of podiatric medicine who is ap-
7 pointed as a podiatrist under section 7401(1) of this
8 title.

9 “(2) A doctor of optometry who is appointed as
10 an optometrist under section 7401(1) of this title.”.

11 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
12 tions at the beginning of subchapter I of chapter 74
13 of such title is amended by striking the item relating
14 to section 7413 and inserting the following new item
“7413. Treatment of podiatrists and optometrists; clinical oversight standards.”.

15 (b) CLARIFICATION OF ROLE.—Section 7306 of such
16 title is amended—

17 (1) in subsection (a)—

18 (A) in paragraph (6), by striking “, a Di-
19 rector of Dietetic Service, and a Director of Op-
20 tometric Service” and inserting “and a Director
21 of Dietetic Service”;

22 (B) by redesignating paragraph (12) as
23 paragraph (13); and

24 (C) by inserting after paragraph (11) the
25 following new paragraph (12):

1 described in paragraph (1) annual leave restored
2 pursuant to section 6304(d)(1)(B) of such title dur-
3 ing calendar years not described in such paragraph
4 with the approval of the Director of the Office of
5 Personnel Management.

6 (b) LEAVE EXPIRATION.—Annual leave consolidated
7 into the annual leave account described in subsection
8 (a)(1) shall be used before the later of—

9 (1) January 9, 2027; and

10 (2) the applicable deadline pursuant to section
11 630.309 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, or
12 successor regulation.

13 (c) PROGRAM OF LUMP SUM PAYMENTS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of
15 appropriations, the Secretary may establish a pro-
16 gram under which, during the period beginning on
17 the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on
18 January 9, 2027, a covered employee with annual
19 leave described in subsection (a)(1) may elect to re-
20 ceive a single lump sum payment in lieu of using
21 such leave.

22 (2) TREATMENT OF LUMP SUM PAYMENTS.—A
23 lump sum payment under a program established
24 under paragraph (1) shall be treated as separate
25 and apart from any lump sum payment of annual

1 leave the covered employee may otherwise be entitled
2 to upon separation from employment with the De-
3 partment.

4 (d) COVERED EMPLOYEE DEFINED.—In this section,
5 the term “covered employee” means an employee of the
6 Department of Veterans Affairs who—

7 (1) was appointed under chapter 73 or 74 of
8 title 38, United States Code, notwithstanding section
9 7421(a) of such title, section 7425(b) of such title,
10 or any other provision of such chapter that impacts
11 leave for such an employee;

12 (2) was appointed under chapter 78 of such
13 title; or

14 (3) occupied any position under the jurisdiction
15 of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that is subject
16 to the leave provisions of chapter 63 of title 5,
17 United States Code.

18 **SEC. 223. EXPANSION OF REIMBURSEMENT OF CON-**
19 **TINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION EX-**
20 **PENSES.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7411 of title 38, United
22 States Code, is amended to read as follows:

1 **“§ 7411. Reimbursement of continuing professional**
 2 **education expenses**

3 “The Secretary shall reimburse certain full-time
 4 health care professionals of the Department for expenses
 5 incurred for continuing professional education in amounts
 6 as follows:

7 “(1) With respect to any physician, dentist, po-
 8 diatrist, chiropractor, optometrist, registered nurse,
 9 or physician assistant appointed under section
 10 7401(1) of this title, not more than \$1,000 per year
 11 for each such individual.

12 “(2) With respect to any licensed practical or
 13 vocational nurse, medical technologist, pharmacist,
 14 pharmacy technician, psychologist, diagnostic
 15 radiologic technologist, or social worker appointed
 16 under section 7401(3) of this title, not more than
 17 \$1,000 per year for each such individual.”.

18 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 19 at the beginning of subchapter I of chapter 74 of title 38,
 20 United States Code, is amended by striking the item relat-
 21 ing to section 7411 and inserting the following new item:

“7411. Reimbursement of continuing professional education expenses.”.

22 **SEC. 224. INCLUSION OF POLICE OFFICERS OF DEPART-**
 23 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AS LAW EN-**
 24 **FORCEMENT OFFICERS.**

25 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

1 (1) the term “Director” means the Director of
2 the Office of Personnel Management;

3 (2) the term “Fund” means the Civil Service
4 Retirement and Disability Fund;

5 (3) the term “incumbent” means an individual
6 who—

7 (A) was appointed as a law enforcement
8 officer before the date of enactment of this Act;
9 and

10 (B) is serving as a law enforcement officer
11 on the date of enactment of this Act;

12 (4) the term “law enforcement officer” means
13 an individual who satisfies the requirements of sec-
14 tion 8331(20) or 8401(17) of title 5, United States
15 Code, by virtue of the amendments made by this sec-
16 tion;

17 (5) the term “prior service” means, with re-
18 spect to an incumbent who makes an election under
19 subsection (c)(2), service performed by the incum-
20 bent before the date on which appropriate retirement
21 deductions begin to be made under the election; and

22 (6) the term “service” means service performed
23 by an individual as a law enforcement officer.

24 (b) CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Title 5, United States Code,
2 is amended—

3 (A) in section 8331(20), in the matter pre-
4 ceding subparagraph (A)—

5 (i) by inserting “(or who is described
6 in section 8401(17)(E))” after “criminal
7 laws of the United States”; and

8 (ii) by inserting “(or who is so de-
9 scribed)” after “engaged in this activity”;
10 and

11 (B) in section 8401(17)—

12 (i) in subparagraph (C)—

13 (I) by striking “subparagraph
14 (A) and (B)” and inserting “subpara-
15 graph (A), (B), or (E)”; and

16 (II) by striking “and” at the end;

17 (ii) in the flush text following sub-
18 paragraph (D)(iii), by adding “and” after
19 the semicolon at the end; and

20 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
21 lowing:

22 “(E) an employee of the Department of
23 Veterans Affairs who is a Department police of-
24 ficer under section 902 of title 38, as deter-
25 mined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;”.

1 (2) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by
2 this subsection shall apply to any—

3 (A) individual who is appointed as a law
4 enforcement officer—

5 (i) as defined in section 8331(20) or
6 8401(17) of title 5, United States Code, as
7 amended by this subsection; and

8 (ii) on or after the date of enactment
9 of this Act; and

10 (B) incumbent, consistent with the require-
11 ments of this section.

12 (c) TREATMENT OF SERVICE PERFORMED BY INCUM-
13 BENTS.—

14 (1) SERVICE ON OR AFTER DATE OF ENACT-
15 MENT.—Service performed by an incumbent on or
16 after the date of enactment of this Act shall be
17 treated as service performed as a law enforcement
18 officer.

19 (2) SERVICE BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.—
20 Service performed by an incumbent before the date
21 of enactment of this Act shall, for purposes of sub-
22 chapter III of chapter 83 and chapter 84 of title 5,
23 United States Code, be treated as service performed
24 as a law enforcement officer only if the incumbent

1 submits a written election to the Director by the ear-
2 lier of—

3 (A) the date that is 5 years after the date
4 of enactment of this Act; or

5 (B) the day before the date on which the
6 incumbent separates from the service.

7 (d) INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PRIOR SERV-
8 ICE.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—An incumbent who makes an
10 election under subsection (c)(2) may, with respect to
11 prior service performed by the incumbent, pay a de-
12 posit into the Fund equal to the sum of—

13 (A) the difference between—

14 (i) the amount that would have been
15 deducted during the period of prior service
16 under section 8334 or 8422 of title 5,
17 United States Code, from the pay of the
18 incumbent if the amendments made by this
19 section had been in effect during the prior
20 service; and

21 (ii) the amount that was deducted
22 during the period of prior service under
23 section 8334 or 8422 of title 5, United
24 States Code; and

1 (B) interest on the amount described in
2 subparagraph (A)(i), as computed under—

3 (i) paragraphs (2) and (3) of section
4 8334(e) of title 5, United States Code; and

5 (ii) regulations promulgated by the
6 Director.

7 (2) EFFECT OF NOT CONTRIBUTING.—If an in-
8 cumbent does not pay the full amount of the deposit
9 described in paragraph (1)—

10 (A) all prior service of the incumbent shall
11 remain fully creditable as a law enforcement of-
12 ficer; and

13 (B) the resulting annuity shall be re-
14 duced—

15 (i) in a manner similar to that de-
16 scribed in section 8334(d)(2) of title 5,
17 United States Code; and

18 (ii) to the extent necessary to make
19 up the amount unpaid.

20 (e) GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PRIOR SERV-
21 ICE.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—If an incumbent makes an
23 election under subsection (c)(2), an agency that em-
24 ployed the incumbent during any prior service of the

1 incumbent shall remit to the Director, for deposit in
2 the Fund, an amount equal to the sum of—

3 (A) the difference between—

4 (i) the total amount of Government
5 contributions that would have been paid
6 under section 8334 or 8423 of title 5,
7 United States Code, if the amendments
8 made by this section had been in effect
9 during the prior service; and

10 (ii) the total amount of Government
11 contributions paid under section 8334 or
12 8423 of title 5, United States Code; and

13 (B) interest on the amount described in
14 subparagraph (A)(i), as computed in accordance
15 with—

16 (i) paragraphs (2) and (3) of section
17 8334(e) of title 5, United States Code; and

18 (ii) regulations promulgated by the
19 Director.

20 (2) CONTRIBUTIONS TO BE MADE RATABLY.—

21 Government contributions under this subsection on
22 behalf of an incumbent shall be made by the agency
23 ratably (not less frequently than annually) over the
24 10-year period beginning on the date described in
25 subsection (a)(5).

1 (f) EXEMPTION FROM MANDATORY SEPARATION.—
 2 Notwithstanding sections 8335(b) and 8425(b) of title 5,
 3 United States Code, a law enforcement officer shall not
 4 be subject to mandatory separation during the 3-year pe-
 5 riod beginning on the date of enactment of this Act.

6 (g) REGULATIONS.—The Director shall prescribe reg-
 7 ulations to carry out this section, and the amendments
 8 made by this section, including regulations for the applica-
 9 tion of this section (and those amendments) in the case
 10 of any individual entitled to a survivor annuity (based on
 11 the service of an incumbent who dies before making an
 12 election under subsection (c)(2)), to the extent that any
 13 rights that would have been available to the decedent if
 14 still living.

15 (h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
 16 tion, or an amendment made by this section, shall be con-
 17 sidered to apply in the case of a reemployed annuitant.

18 **SEC. 225. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PER-**

19 **SONNEL TRANSPARENCY.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 505 of the John S.
 21 McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka, and Samuel R. Johnson VA
 22 Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Inte-
 23 grated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–
 24 182; 38 U.S.C. 301 note) is amended—

25 (1) in subsection (a)—

- 1 (A) in paragraph (1)—
- 2 (i) in the matter before subparagraph
- 3 (A), by striking “information,” and all
- 4 that follows through “facility:” and insert-
- 5 ing “information:”;
- 6 (ii) in subparagraph (B)—
- 7 (I) by inserting “(i)” before “The
- 8 number”; and
- 9 (II) by adding at the end the fol-
- 10 lowing new clause:
- 11 “(ii) Information made available under this
- 12 subparagraph shall be updated not less fre-
- 13 quently than once each quarter to account for
- 14 delays in data processing and shall reflect the
- 15 most recently available data.”;
- 16 (iii) in subparagraph (C), by striking
- 17 “vacancies, by occupation.” and inserting
- 18 “positions currently undergoing a recruit-
- 19 ment action, disaggregated by occupation
- 20 and by stage of recruitment, including pre-
- 21 posting, posting processing stage, recruit-
- 22 ment stage, onboarding stage, and waiting
- 23 to start stage, or successor stages if modi-
- 24 fied.”; and

1 (iv) by adding at the end the following
2 new subparagraph:

3 “(F) The number of positions vacated that
4 the Secretary as decided not to backfill,
5 disaggregated by occupation.”;

6 (B) by redesignating paragraph (5) as
7 paragraph (6);

8 (C) by inserting after paragraph (4) the
9 following new paragraph (5):

10 “(5) DISPLAY OF INFORMATION.—The display
11 of information made publicly available on an Inter-
12 net website of the Department pursuant to para-
13 graph (1), subject to subparagraph (D) of such
14 paragraph, shall be disaggregated—

15 “(A) by departmental component;

16 “(B) in the case of information relating to
17 Veterans Health Administration positions, by
18 medical facility; and

19 “(C) in the case of information relating to
20 Veterans Benefits Administration positions, by
21 regional office.”; and

22 (D) in paragraph (6), as redesignated by
23 subparagraph (B), by striking “shall” and all
24 that follows and inserting “shall—

1 “(A) review the administration of the
2 website required under paragraph (1);

3 “(B) develop recommendations relating to
4 the improvement of such administration; and

5 “(C) submit to the Committee on Vet-
6 erans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee
7 on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Represent-
8 atives a report containing—

9 “(i) the findings of the Inspector Gen-
10 eral with respect to the most recent review
11 conducted under subparagraph (A); and

12 “(ii) the recommendations most re-
13 cently developed under subparagraph
14 (B).”;

15 (2) by amending subsection (b) to read as fol-
16 lows:

17 “(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Each year, the Secretary
18 shall submit to Congress an annual report that includes
19 the following:

20 “(1) A description of the steps the Department
21 is taking to achieve full staffing capacity.

22 “(2) A description of the actions the Depart-
23 ment is taking to improve the onboard timeline for
24 facilities of the Department, including—

1 “(A) in the case of facilities of the Vet-
2 erans Health Administration, for facilities for
3 which the duration of the onboarding process
4 exceeds the metrics laid out in the Time to Hire
5 Model of the Veterans Health Administration,
6 or successor model; and

7 “(B) in the case of Veterans Benefits Ad-
8 ministration, for regional offices that exceed the
9 time-to-hire target of the Office of Personnel
10 Management.

11 “(3) The amount of additional funds necessary
12 to enable the Department to reach full staffing ca-
13 pacity.

14 “(4) Such recommendations for legislative or
15 administrative action as the Secretary may have in
16 order to achieve full staffing capacity at the Depart-
17 ment.”.

18 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
19 subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enact-
20 ment of this Act and shall apply with respect to the first
21 update under section 505(a)(3) of such Act beginning
22 after the date of the enactment of this Act and each up-
23 date thereafter.

1 **SEC. 226. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ASSESSING**
2 **HUMAN RESOURCES MODERNIZATION WITH-**
3 **IN VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after
5 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller
6 General of the United States shall submit to the Com-
7 mittee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Com-
8 mittee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representa-
9 tives a report on human resources modernization con-
10 ducted by the Veterans Health Administration (in this sec-
11 tion referred to as the "Administration").

12 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection
13 (a) shall include an assessment of the following:

14 (1) The Human Resources Modernization Pro-
15 gram of the Administration, including an assessment
16 of the activities carried out under the Program, the
17 results of those activities, and how the Administra-
18 tion measures the performance of those activities.

19 (2) The human resources information tech-
20 nology systems of the Administration, including the
21 performance, accuracy, efficiency, and user-ability of
22 those systems for human resources professionals,
23 managers with hiring authority, and other employees
24 of the Administration who use those systems.

1 (3) Metrics and timelines used to report hiring
2 and vacancy data within the Administration, includ-
3 ing recruitment and retention data.

4 (4) Trends in hiring, recruitment, retention,
5 and vacancies among employees of the Administra-
6 tion.

7 (5) The use by the Administration of authori-
8 ties and waivers for hiring flexibility, including an
9 assessment of the standardization of use of such au-
10 thorities and waivers within each Veterans Inte-
11 grated Service Network.

12 (6) Training, development, and workload of
13 human resources professionals of the Administra-
14 tion.

15 (7) Such other matters as the Comptroller Gen-
16 eral considers relevant.

○