

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1515

To provide a pay incentive for border patrol agents to complete emergency medical technician and paramedic training, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 29, 2021

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, and Ms. SINEMA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To provide a pay incentive for border patrol agents to complete emergency medical technician and paramedic training, 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 TITLES.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Remote, Emergency,
5 Medical, Online Training, Telehealth, and EMT Act” or
6 the “REMOTE Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MEDICAL TRAINING FOR U.S. BORDER PATROL**
2 **AGENTS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 411 of the Homeland Se-
4 curity Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 211) is amended—

5 (1) in subsection (l)—

6 (A) by striking “The Commissioner” and
7 inserting the following:

8 “(1) CONTINUING EDUCATION.—The Commis-
9 sioner”; and

10 (B) by adding at the end the following:

11 “(2) MEDICAL TRAINING FOR U.S. BORDER PA-
12 TROL AGENTS.—

13 “(A) IN GENERAL.—

14 “(i) AVAILABILITY.—Beginning not
15 later than 6 months after the date of the
16 enactment of the REMOTE Act, the Com-
17 missioner shall make available, in each
18 U.S. Border Patrol sector, at no cost to
19 U.S. Border Patrol agents selected for
20 such training, emergency medical techni-
21 cian (referred to in this paragraph as
22 ‘EMT’) and paramedic training, including
23 pediatric medical training, which shall uti-
24 lize nationally recognized pediatric training
25 curricula that includes emergency pediatric
26 care.

1 “(ii) USE OF OFFICIAL DUTY TIME.—
2 A U.S. Border Patrol agent shall be cred-
3 ited with work time for any EMT or para-
4 medic training provided to such agent
5 under clause (i) in order to achieve or
6 maintain an EMT or paramedic certifi-
7 cation.

8 “(iii) OBLIGATED OVERTIME.—A U.S.
9 Border Patrol agent shall not accrue any
10 debt of obligated overtime hours that the
11 agent may have incurred, pursuant to sec-
12 tion 5550(b) of title 5, United States
13 Code, in order to achieve or maintain a
14 paramedic certification.

15 “(iv) LODGING AND PER DIEM.—
16 Lodging and per diem shall be made avail-
17 able to U.S. Border Patrol agents attend-
18 ing training described in clause (i) if such
19 training is not available at a location with-
20 in commuting distance of the agent’s resi-
21 dence or worksite.

22 “(v) SERVICE COMMITMENT.—Any
23 U.S. Border Patrol agent who completes a
24 certification preparation program pursuant
25 to clause (i) shall—

1 “(I) complete 1 year of service as
2 a U.S. Border Patrol agent following
3 the completion of EMT training;

4 “(II) complete 3 years of service
5 as a U.S. Border Patrol agent fol-
6 lowing the completion of paramedic
7 training; or

8 “(III) reimburse U.S. Customs
9 and Border Protection in an amount
10 equal to the product of—

11 “(aa) the cost of providing
12 such training to such agent; mul-
13 tiplied by

14 “(bb) the percentage of the
15 service required under subclauses
16 (I) and (II) that the agent failed
17 to complete.

18 “(B) INCREASE IN RATE OF PAY FOR BOR-
19 DER PATROL MEDICAL CERTIFICATION.—

20 “(i) EMT CERTIFICATION.—A U.S.
21 Border Patrol agent who has completed
22 EMT training pursuant to subparagraph
23 (A)(i) and has a current, State-issued or
24 State-recognized certification as an EMT
25 shall receive, in addition to the pay to

1 which the agent is otherwise entitled under
2 this section, an amount equal to 5 percent
3 of such pay.

4 “(ii) PARAMEDIC CERTIFICATION.—A
5 U.S. Border Patrol agent who has com-
6 pleted paramedic training pursuant to sub-
7 paragraph (A)(i) and has a current, State-
8 issued or State-recognized certification as
9 a paramedic shall receive, in addition to
10 the pay to which the agent is otherwise en-
11 titled under this section (except for sub-
12 paragraph (A)), an amount equal to 10
13 percent of such pay.

14 “(iii) EXISTING CERTIFICATIONS.—A
15 U.S. Border Patrol agent who did not par-
16 ticipate in the training made available pur-
17 suant to subparagraph (A)(i), but, as of
18 the date of the enactment of the REMOTE
19 Act, has a current State-issued or State-
20 recognized EMT or paramedic certifi-
21 cation, shall receive, in addition to the pay
22 to which the agent is otherwise entitled
23 under this section (excluding the applica-
24 tion of clause (i) and (ii)), an amount
25 equal to—

1 “(I) 5 percent of such pay for an
2 EMT certification; and

3 “(II) 10 percent of such pay for
4 a paramedic certification.

5 “(C) AVAILABILITY OF MEDICALLY
6 TRAINED BORDER PATROL AGENTS.—Not later
7 than 6 months after the date of the enactment
8 of the REMOTE Act, the Commissioner of U.S.
9 Customs and Border Protection shall—

10 “(i) ensure that—

11 “(I) U.S. Border Patrol agents
12 with current EMT or paramedic cer-
13 tifications are stationed at each U.S.
14 Border Patrol sector and remote sta-
15 tion along the southern border to the
16 greatest extent possible;

17 “(II) not fewer than 10 percent
18 of all U.S. Border Patrol agents as-
19 signed to each U.S. Border Patrol
20 sector have EMT certifications; and

21 “(III) not fewer than 1 percent
22 of all U.S. Border Patrol agents as-
23 signed to each U.S. Border Patrol
24 sector have paramedic certifications;
25 and

1 “(ii) in determining the assigned posts
2 of U.S. Border Patrol agents who have re-
3 ceived training under subparagraph (A)(i),
4 give priority to remote stations and for-
5 ward operating bases.

6 “(D) MEDICAL SUPPLIES.—

7 “(i) MINIMUM LIST.—The Commis-
8 sioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protec-
9 tion shall provide minimum medical sup-
10 plies to each U.S. Border Patrol agent
11 with an EMT or paramedic certification
12 and to each U.S. Border Patrol sector, in-
13 cluding all remote stations and forward op-
14 erating bases, for use while on patrol, in-
15 cluding—

16 “(I) supplies designed for chil-
17 dren;

18 “(II) first aid kits; and

19 “(III) oral hydration, such as
20 water.

21 “(ii) CONSULTATION.—In developing
22 the minimum list of medical supplies re-
23 quired under clause (i), the Commissioner
24 shall consult national organizations with
25 expertise in emergency medical care, in-

1 cluding emergency medical care of chil-
2 dren.

3 “(E) MOTOR VEHICLES.—The Commis-
4 sioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection
5 shall make available appropriate motor vehicles
6 to U.S. Border Patrol agents with current EMT
7 or paramedic certifications to enable them to
8 provide necessary emergency medical assistance.

9 “(F) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 3
10 years after the date of the enactment of the
11 REMOTE Act, the Comptroller General of the
12 United States shall—

13 “(i) review the progress of the U.S.
14 Customs and Border Protection’s pro-
15 motion in reaching the goal of up to 10
16 percent of all U.S. Border Patrol agents
17 having EMT or paramedic certifications;
18 and

19 “(ii) provide a recommendation to
20 Congress as to whether—

21 “(I) the Commissioner of U.S.
22 Customs and Border Protection has
23 effectively and vigorously undertaken
24 an agency-wide effort to encourage
25 and promote the mandate for medical

1 training for U.S. Border Patrol
2 agents under this paragraph;

3 “(II) additional incentive modi-
4 fications are needed to achieve or
5 maintain the goal, including pay dif-
6 ferentials; and

7 “(III) the 10 percent goal is
8 properly scoped to materially con-
9 tribute to the preservation of life and
10 the effectiveness and efficiency of U.S.
11 Border Patrol operations, including
12 whether the number is too high or too
13 low.”; and

14 (2) in subsection (r), by striking “section, the
15 terms” and inserting the following: “section—

16 “(1) the term ‘child’ means any individual who
17 has not reached 18 years of age; and

18 “(2) the terms”.

19 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
20 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
21 necessary to carry out section 411(l)(2) of the Homeland
22 Security Act of 2002, as added by subsection (a).

23 **SEC. 3. IDENTIFYING AND TREATING INDIVIDUALS EXPERI-**
24 **ENCING MEDICAL DISTRESS.**

25 (a) ONLINE TRAINING.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date that
2 is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this
3 Act, the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border
4 Protection shall require all U.S. Border Patrol
5 agents, including agents with EMT or paramedic
6 certification, to complete an online training program
7 that meets nationally recognized standards for the
8 medical care of children to enable U.S. Border Pa-
9 trol agents—

10 (A) to identify common signs of medical
11 distress in children; and

12 (B) to ensure the timely transport of sick
13 or injured children to an appropriate medical
14 provider.

15 (2) CONTRACT.—In developing or selecting an
16 online training program under paragraph (1), the
17 Commissioner may enter into a contract with a na-
18 tional professional medical association of pediatric
19 medical providers.

20 (b) VOICE ACCESS TO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of U.S.
22 Customs and Border Protection shall ensure that all
23 remote U.S. Border Patrol stations, forward oper-
24 ating bases, and remote ports of entry along the
25 southern border of the United States have 24-hour

1 voice access to a medical command physician whose
2 board certification includes the ability to perform
3 this role or a mid-level health care provider with pe-
4 diatric training for consultations regarding the med-
5 ical needs of individuals, including children, taken
6 into custody near the United States border.

7 (2) ACCEPTABLE MEANS OF ACCESS.—Access
8 under paragraph (1) may be accomplished through
9 mobile phones, satellite mobile radios, or other
10 means prescribed by the Commissioner.

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