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2D SESSION

S. 3355

To provide for an Internet website for information on benefits, resources, services, and opportunities for veterans and their families and caregivers, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 12, 2010

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. JOHANNES, and Mrs. MURRAY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To provide for an Internet website for information on benefits, resources, services, and opportunities for veterans and their families and caregivers, 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 “Veterans One Source
5 Act of 2010”.

1 **SEC. 2. ONE-STOP INTERNET WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION**
2 **ON BENEFITS, RESOURCES, SERVICES, AND**
3 **OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS AND THEIR**
4 **FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS.**

5 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
6 ings:

7 (1) One of the most critical problems identified
8 by veterans and their families and caregivers is a
9 lack of easily accessible information and advice on
10 benefits, resources, services, and opportunities for
11 members of the veteran community.

12 (2) A guiding principle of the Department of
13 Veterans Affairs in bringing the Department into
14 the 21st century is to ensure coordination between
15 the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Depart-
16 ment of Defense to provide a seamless transition
17 from military life to civilian life.

18 (3) The Department of Veterans Affairs has
19 also emphasized its intent to modernize, streamline,
20 and simplify the provision of resources to the vet-
21 eran community, including through the elimination
22 of paper waste.

23 (4) The Internet increasingly serves as an es-
24 sential communication tool for all sectors of society
25 and should be used efficiently and effectively as a

1 tool to provide interactive outreach to the veteran
2 community.

3 (5) The Department of Veterans Affairs, the
4 Department of Labor, and other departments and
5 agencies of the Federal Government have taken
6 strong steps to improve outreach to veterans, includ-
7 ing through the creation of Internet websites for
8 specific veteran populations, such as the National
9 Resource Directory for wounded veterans.

10 (6) However, the lack of a single, all-inclusive,
11 user-friendly Internet website with all relevant infor-
12 mation on benefits, resources, services, and opportu-
13 nities for veterans and their families and caregivers
14 continues to impede the seamless transition of vet-
15 erans from military life to civilian life.

16 (7) Moreover, veterans and their families and
17 caregivers continue to seek direct and personalized
18 assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs
19 that could be effectively and efficiently supplemented
20 by strong, interactive online services.

21 (8) The Department of Defense has imple-
22 mented an effective and well-used program, Military
23 One Source, that includes an Internet website with
24 consolidated information for members of the Armed
25 Forces on active duty.

1 (9) The Department of Defense has also suc-
2 cessfully employed various interactive, virtual tools
3 on its Internet websites to provide a higher quality
4 virtual Internet experience to members of the Armed
5 Forces.

6 (10) The veterans community would be well-
7 served by the establishment of a single, consolidated,
8 expanded, and interactive Internet website to ensure
9 streamlined and simplified access to all information
10 and advice on benefits, resources, services, and op-
11 portunities available to veterans and their families
12 and caregivers.

13 (b) ONE-STOP INTERNET WEBSITE FOR INFORMA-
14 TION ON BENEFITS, RESOURCES, SERVICES, AND OPPOR-
15 TUNITIES FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND
16 CAREGIVERS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
18 Affairs shall establish and maintain an interactive
19 Internet website that provides information on the
20 benefits, resources, services, and opportunities de-
21 scribed in subsection (d). The Secretary may enter
22 into a contract with an appropriate Federal or pri-
23 vate sector entity for purposes of establishing or
24 maintaining the website.

25 (2) NATURE OF WEBSITE.—The website shall—

1 (A) serve to consolidate, expand on, and
2 improve information and links from other exist-
3 ing Internet websites relating to the benefits,
4 resources, services, and opportunities described
5 in subsection (d), and may include such other
6 information and links on such benefits, re-
7 sources, services, and opportunities as the Sec-
8 retary considers appropriate; and

9 (B) integrate dynamic Internet features
10 and virtual interface tools described in sub-
11 section (e) to provide veterans a personalized,
12 interactive, and user-centered Internet experi-
13 ence and increase interoperability, facilitate col-
14 laborative information sharing, and streamline
15 provision of information and advice to veterans
16 and their families and caregivers.

17 (3) UTILIZATION OF EXISTING WEBSITE IN ES-
18 TABLISHMENT.—In establishing the website, the
19 Secretary may utilize an existing Internet website,
20 such as the National Resource Directory for wound-
21 ed veterans, as the basis for the website, in order to
22 avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

23 (4) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of Vet-
24 erans Affairs carry out activities under this sub-
25 section in consultation with the following:

1 (A) The Secretary of Defense, particularly
2 with respect to the Military One Source pro-
3 gram and other interactive virtual tools em-
4 ployed by the Department of Defense.

5 (B) The Secretary of Labor.

6 (C) The Secretary of Education.

7 (D) The Commissioner of Internal Rev-
8 enue.

9 (E) The Commissioner of Social Security.

10 (F) The Administrator of the Small Busi-
11 ness Administration.

12 (G) Any other Federal officials that the
13 Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers appro-
14 priate for purposes of this section.

15 (H) Appropriate advisory committees on
16 veterans matters.

17 (I) Other representatives, individuals, and
18 organizations specified in section 6302(c) of
19 title 38, United States Code.

20 (c) DOMAIN AND NAME OF WEBSITE.—

21 (1) DOMAIN.—In establishing the Internet
22 website under subsection (b) the Secretary shall con-
23 sider the advisability of registering the website in
24 the “.com” domain, rather than the “.gov” domain,
25 and shall register the website in the “.com” domain

1 if the Secretary considers registration of the website
2 in that domain advisable.

3 (2) NAME.—The name selected for the website
4 shall be a name intended to reveal the website as a
5 single, one-stop resource for veterans and their fami-
6 lies and caregivers on the benefits, resources, serv-
7 ices, and opportunities described in subsection (d).

8 (d) BENEFITS, RESOURCES, SERVICES, AND OPPOR-
9 TUNITIES.—The benefits, resources, services, and oppor-
10 tunities described in this subsection are benefits, re-
11 sources, services, and opportunities as follows:

12 (1) Veterans benefits provided by or through
13 the Department of Veterans Affairs, including pen-
14 sion and compensation benefits, health care benefits
15 (including mental health care benefits), education
16 assistance and benefits, housing assistance and ben-
17 efits, and other assistance and benefits.

18 (2) Veterans benefits provided by or through
19 the Department of Labor, including employment and
20 reemployment benefits, and other benefits provided
21 by or through the Department of Labor.

22 (3) Tax benefits.

23 (4) Social security benefits.

24 (5) Veterans benefits provided by or through
25 the Small Business Administration, including assist-

1 ance related to small business, and other benefits
2 provided by or through the Small Business Adminis-
3 tration.

4 (6) Resources, services, and opportunities such
5 as—

6 (A) resources for families;

7 (B) resources on child care;

8 (C) resources on home care;

9 (D) resources for caregivers;

10 (E) resources for education professionals,
11 mental health professionals, and other profes-
12 sionals that provide for veterans;

13 (F) resources on stress management and
14 mental health care;

15 (G) resources on veterans service organiza-
16 tions (including website links to organization lo-
17 cators and claims assistance);

18 (H) information and links on State and
19 local resources;

20 (I) information on discounts available to
21 veterans;

22 (J) information and resources on volunteer
23 opportunities available to veterans, including
24 opportunities at Department of Veterans Af-
25 fairs medical centers;

1 (K) information and resources on commu-
2 nity events; and

3 (L) such other information and resources
4 as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers
5 appropriate for purposes of the website required
6 by this section.

7 (7) Assistance in applying for and receiving
8 benefits and resources under paragraphs (1) through
9 (6).

10 (8) Such other benefits, resources, services, op-
11 portunities, and assistance as the Secretary con-
12 siders appropriate for purposes of the website.

13 (e) INTERACTIVE FEATURES.—In incorporating
14 interactive features in the Internet website required by
15 this section pursuant to subsection (b)(2)(B), the Sec-
16 retary should incorporate the following:

17 (1) Tools such as interactive, animated virtual
18 guides, to guide users through the website.

19 (2) Resources on peer-to-peer discussions, work-
20 shops, and other interactive services for veterans
21 and their families and caregivers.

22 (3) Information on ride-sharing for appoint-
23 ments.

24 (4) Memorial notices.

25 (5) Internet applications.

1 (6) Such other interactive features as the Sec-
2 retary considers appropriate.

3 (f) INCLUSION OF INFORMATION ON WEBSITE IN BI-
4 ENNIAL REPORTS RELATING TO OUTREACH ACTIVI-
5 TIES.—

6 (1) BIENNIAL PLAN.—The Secretary of Vet-
7 erans Affairs shall include in each biennial plan on
8 outreach activities of the Department of Veterans
9 Affairs under section 6302 of title 38, United States
10 Code, the plans of the Department for the period
11 covered by such report for improving and enhancing
12 the Internet website required by this section to bet-
13 ter provide information on the benefits, resources,
14 services, and opportunities described in subsection
15 (d) and to otherwise enhance the website as a source
16 and point of contact for information on such bene-
17 fits, resources, services, and opportunities.

18 (2) BIENNIAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall
19 include in each biennial report on outreach activities
20 of the Department under section 6308 of title 38,
21 United States Code, a description of the manner in
22 which the Internet website required by this section
23 contributed to the outreach activities of the Sec-

- 1 retary, including outreach activities under chapter
- 2 63 of such title.

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