

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors providing counseling for women veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mrs. ERNST) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors providing counseling for women veterans, 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. PEER-TO-PEER COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR**
4 **WOMEN VETERANS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1720F(j) of title 38,
6 United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
7 following new paragraph:

8 “(4)(A) As part of the counseling program under this
9 subsection, the Secretary shall ensure that the program

1 includes a sufficient number of peer counselors for women
2 veterans to meet the demand for such counselors. Such
3 counselors may be employees of the Department and may
4 have expertise in—

5 “(i) gender-specific issues and services;

6 “(ii) the provision of information about services
7 and benefits provided under laws administered by
8 the Secretary; and

9 “(iii) employment mentoring.

10 “(B) In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary
11 shall emphasize facilitating peer-to-peer counseling for
12 women veterans who suffered sexual trauma while serving
13 in the Armed Forces, have post-traumatic stress disorder
14 or suffer from another mental health condition, or are oth-
15 erwise at risk of becoming homeless.

16 “(C) The Secretary shall conduct outreach to inform
17 women veterans about the program and the assistance
18 available under the program.

19 “(D)(i) In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary
20 shall facilitate engagement and coordination with such
21 community organizations, State and local governments, in-
22 stitutions of higher education, chambers of commerce,
23 local business organizations, organizations that provide
24 legal assistance, and other organizations as the Secretary

1 considers appropriate to facilitate the transition of women
2 described in subparagraph (A) into their communities.

3 “(ii) To the degree practicable, the Secretary shall
4 coordinate facilitation of assistance under this paragraph
5 with the program carried out under section 1144 of title
6 10.”.

7 (b) FUNDING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
8 shall carry out paragraph (4) of section 1720F(j) of title
9 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), using
10 funds otherwise made available to the Secretary. No addi-
11 tional funds are authorized to be appropriated by reason
12 of such paragraph.