

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1476

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to State and local entities to carry out peer-to-peer mental health programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2021

Mr. ZELDIN (for himself, Mr. GARBARINO, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio, Mr. STEUBE, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. KILMER, Mr. BACON, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. STEIL, Mr. ROSE, Mr. CAWTHORN, and Mr. FEENSTRA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to State and local entities to carry out peer-to-peer mental health programs.

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 “PFC Joseph P. Dwyer
5 Peer Support Program Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PFC JOSEPH P. DWYER PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
8 shall establish a grant program to be known as the “PFC

1 Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program” under which the
2 Secretary shall make grants to eligible entities for the pur-
3 pose of establishing peer-to-peer mental health programs
4 for veterans.

5 (b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—In this section,
6 the term “eligible entity” means any of the following enti-
7 ties that submit to the Secretary an application containing
8 such information and assurances as the Secretary may re-
9 quire:

10 (1) A nonprofit organization having historically
11 served veterans’ mental health needs.

12 (2) A congressionally chartered veteran service
13 organization.

14 (3) A State, local, or Tribal veteran service
15 agency, director, or commissioner.

16 (c) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The recipient of a grant
17 under this section shall receive a grant in an amount that
18 does not exceed \$250,000.

19 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—The recipient of a grant under
20 this section shall use the grant funds to—

21 (1) carry out a program that meets the stand-
22 ards developed under subsection (e);

23 (2) hire veterans to serve as peer specialists to
24 host group and individual meetings with veterans
25 seeking nonclinical support;

1 (3) provide mental health support to veterans
2 24 hours each day, seven days each week; and

3 (4) hire staff to support the program.

4 (e) PROGRAM STANDARDS.—

5 (1) ADVISORY COMMISSION.—The Secretary
6 shall establish an advisory committee for the pur-
7 pose of creating appropriate standards applicable to
8 programs established using grants under this sec-
9 tion.

10 (2) STANDARDS.—The standards developed
11 under paragraph (1) shall include initial and contin-
12 ued training for veteran peer volunteers, administra-
13 tive staffing needs, and best practices for addressing
14 the needs of each veteran served.

15 (f) NONRETENTION OF RECORDS.—The Secretary
16 may not require the recipient of a grant under this section
17 to maintain records on veterans seeking support or to re-
18 port any personally identifying information directly or in-
19 directly to the Secretary about such veterans.

20 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
21 authorized to be appropriated \$25,000,000 to carry out
22 this section during the 3-year period beginning on the date
23 of the enactment of this Act.

○