

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1315

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to establish, or expand upon, master's degree programs in orthotics and prosthetics, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 2, 2019

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASEY, Mr. PETERS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. COONS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to establish, or expand upon, master's degree programs in orthotics and prosthetics, 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 “Wounded Warrior
5 Workforce Enhancement Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS EDUCATION IM-**
7 **PROVEMENT.**

8 (a) GRANTS REQUIRED.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
2 Affairs shall award grants to eligible institutions to
3 enable the eligible institutions—

4 (A) to establish a master’s degree program
5 in orthotics and prosthetics; or

6 (B) to expand upon an existing master’s
7 degree program in orthotics and prosthetics, in-
8 cluding by admitting more students, further
9 training faculty, expanding facilities, or increas-
10 ing cooperation with the Department of Vet-
11 erans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

12 (2) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give pri-
13 ority in the award of grants under this section to eli-
14 gible institutions that have entered into a partner-
15 ship with a medical center or clinic administered by
16 the Department of Veterans Affairs or a facility ad-
17 ministered by the Department of Defense, including
18 by providing clinical rotations at such medical cen-
19 ter, clinic, or facility.

20 (3) GRANT AMOUNTS.—Grants awarded under
21 this section shall be in amounts of not less than
22 \$1,000,000 and not more than \$1,500,000.

23 (b) REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
25 the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less

1 frequently than annually thereafter for two years,
2 the Secretary shall issue a request for proposals
3 from eligible institutions for grants under this sec-
4 tion.

5 (2) PROPOSALS.—An eligible institution that
6 seeks the award of a grant under this section shall
7 submit an application therefor to the Secretary at
8 such time, in such manner, and accompanied by
9 such information as the Secretary may require, in-
10 cluding—

11 (A) demonstration of a willingness and
12 ability to participate in a partnership described
13 in subsection (a)(2); and

14 (B) a commitment, and demonstration of
15 an ability, to maintain an accredited orthotics
16 and prosthetics education program after the
17 end of the grant period.

18 (c) GRANT USES.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible institution
20 awarded a grant under this section shall use grant
21 amounts to carry out any of the following:

22 (A) Building new or expanding existing
23 orthotics and prosthetics master's degree pro-
24 grams.

1 (B) Training doctoral candidates in fields
 2 related to orthotics and prosthetics to prepare
 3 them to instruct in orthotics and prosthetics
 4 programs.

5 (C) Training faculty in orthotics and pros-
 6 thetics education or related fields for the pur-
 7 pose of instruction in orthotics and prosthetics
 8 programs.

9 (D) Salary supplementation for faculty in
 10 orthotics and prosthetics education.

11 (E) Financial aid that allows eligible insti-
 12 tutions to admit additional students to study
 13 orthotics and prosthetics.

14 (F) Funding faculty research projects or
 15 faculty time to undertake research in the areas
 16 of orthotics and prosthetics for the purpose of
 17 furthering their teaching abilities.

18 (G) Renovation of buildings or minor con-
 19 struction to house orthotics and prosthetics
 20 education programs.

21 (H) Purchasing equipment for orthotics
 22 and prosthetics education.

23 (2) LIMITATION ON CONSTRUCTION.—An eligi-
 24 ble institution awarded a grant under this section

1 may use not more than 50 percent of the grant
2 amount to carry out paragraph (1)(G).

3 (3) ADMISSIONS PREFERENCE.—An eligible in-
4 stitution awarded a grant under this section shall
5 give preference in admission to the orthotics and
6 prosthetics master’s degree programs to veterans, to
7 the extent practicable.

8 (4) PERIOD OF USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible in-
9 stitution awarded a grant under this section may use
10 the grant amount for a period of three years after
11 the award of the grant.

12 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

13 (1) The term “eligible institution” means an
14 educational institution that offers an orthotics and
15 prosthetics education program that—

16 (A) is accredited by the National Commis-
17 sion on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education in
18 cooperation with the Commission on Accredita-
19 tion of Allied Health Education Programs; or

20 (B) demonstrates an ability to meet the ac-
21 creditation requirements for orthotic and pros-
22 thetic education from the National Commission
23 on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education in co-
24 operation with the Commission on Accreditation

1 of Allied Health Education Programs if the in-
 2 stitution receives a grant under this section.

3 (2) The term “veteran” has the meaning given
 4 that term in section 101 of title 38, United States
 5 Code.

6 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
 8 appropriated for fiscal year 2020 for the Depart-
 9 ment of Veterans Affairs, \$15,000,000 to carry out
 10 this section. The amount so authorized to be appro-
 11 priated shall remain available for obligation until
 12 September 30, 2022.

13 (2) UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS TO BE RETURNED
 14 TO THE TREASURY.—Any amounts authorized to be
 15 appropriated by paragraph (1) that are not obligated
 16 by the Secretary as of September 30, 2022, shall be
 17 returned to the Treasury of the United States.

18 **SEC. 3. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ORTHOTIC AND PROS-**
 19 **THETIC EDUCATION.**

20 (a) GRANT FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTER.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
 22 Affairs shall award a grant to an eligible institution
 23 to enable the eligible institution—

(A) to establish the Center of Excellence in Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (in this section referred to as the “Center”); and

(B) to enable the eligible institution to improve orthotic and prosthetic outcomes for veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and civilians by conducting evidence-based research on—

(i) the knowledge, skills, and training most needed by clinical professionals in the field of orthotics and prosthetics; and

(ii) how to most effectively prepare clinical professionals to provide effective, high-quality orthotic and prosthetic care.

(2) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give priority in the award of a grant under this section to an eligible institution that has in force, or demonstrates the willingness and ability to enter into, a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, or other appropriate Federal agency, or a cooperative agreement with an appropriate private sector entity, which memorandum of understanding or cooperative agreement provides for either, or both, of the following:

1 (A) The provision of resources, whether in
2 cash or in-kind, to the Center.

3 (B) Assistance to the Center in conducting
4 research and disseminating the results of such
5 research.

6 (3) GRANT AMOUNT.—The grant awarded
7 under this section shall be in the amount of
8 \$5,000,000.

9 (b) REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
11 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
12 shall issue a request for proposals from eligible insti-
13 tutions for the grant under this section.

14 (2) PROPOSALS.—An eligible institution that
15 seeks the award of the grant under this section shall
16 submit an application therefor to the Secretary at
17 such time, in such manner, and accompanied by
18 such information as the Secretary may require.

19 (c) GRANT USES.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The eligible institution
21 awarded the grant under this section shall use the
22 grant amount as follows:

23 (A) To develop an agenda for orthotics and
24 prosthetics education research.

1 (B) To fund research in the area of
2 orthotics and prosthetics education.

3 (C) To publish or otherwise disseminate
4 research findings relating to orthotics and pros-
5 thetics education.

6 (2) PERIOD OF USE OF FUNDS.—The eligible
7 institution awarded the grant under this section may
8 use the grant amount for a period of five years after
9 the award of the grant.

10 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) The term “eligible institution” means an
12 educational institution that—

13 (A) has a robust research program;

14 (B) offers an orthotics and prosthetics
15 education program that is accredited by the Na-
16 tional Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic
17 Education in cooperation with the Commission
18 on Accreditation of Allied Health Education
19 Programs;

20 (C) is well recognized in the field of
21 orthotics and prosthetics education; and

22 (D) has an established association with—

23 (i) a medical center or clinic of the
24 Department of Veterans Affairs; and

25 (ii) a local rehabilitation hospital.

1 (2) The term “veteran” has the meaning given
2 that term in section 101 of title 38, United States
3 Code.

4 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
5 authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2020 for the
6 Department of Veterans Affairs, \$5,000,000 to carry out
7 this section.

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