

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 3235

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a pilot program on posttraumatic growth, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 28, 2020

Ms. MCSALLY (for herself and Mr. KAINE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a pilot program on posttraumatic growth, 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 Posttrau-  
5 matic Growth Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) There is a shortage of adequate, timely, and  
9 effective mental health care available to veterans  
10 across the United States.

1           (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs con-  
2           tinues to highlight veterans mental health care and  
3           suicide prevention as a key priority.

4           (3) There is an opportunity to explore effective  
5           alternative treatments focused on the area of post-  
6           traumatic growth.

7   **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM ON POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH.**

8           (a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
9           shall conduct a pilot program to study the effectiveness  
10          and benefits of nonprofit posttraumatic growth programs  
11          to determine—

12           (1) the outcomes of such programs in contrast  
13          to traditional models of mental health care;

14           (2) the possible integration of such nonprofit  
15          programs into the mental health care programs pro-  
16          vided by the Secretary; and

17           (3) the budgetary impacts of such integration.

18          (b) REVIEW AND EVALUATION.—In developing the  
19          pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

20           (1) review relevant literature to summarize the  
21          existing knowledge regarding posttraumatic growth  
22          programs; and

23           (2) evaluate such programs.

24          (c) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the  
25          pilot program under subsection (a) for a two-year period

1 beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of  
2 the enactment of this Act.

3 (d) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall select more  
4 than one location at which to carry out the pilot program  
5 under subsection (a), of which at least one location shall  
6 include a rural area.

7 (e) PARTICIPANTS.—

8 (1) ELIGIBILITY.—A veteran is eligible to par-  
9 ticipate in the pilot program under subsection (a) if  
10 the Secretary determines that the veteran is—

11 (A) not at known immediate risk of at-  
12 tempting suicide; and

13 (B) not participating in traditional mental  
14 health treatment.

15 (2) FEMALE VETERANS.—Not fewer than four  
16 groups of veterans participating in the pilot program  
17 under subsection (a) shall consist only of female vet-  
18 erans.

19 (f) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—The Secretary  
20 shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) by  
21 entering into an agreement with one or more nonprofit  
22 organizations that—

23 (1) have staff with expertise in evidence-based  
24 care and experience working with veterans;

1           (2) have experience in the science of posttrau-  
2       matic growth; and

3           (3) use a standardized, evaluated, and compre-  
4       hensive curriculum.

5       (g) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date  
6       on which the pilot program under subsection (a) is com-  
7       pleted, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report  
8       on the pilot program, including a comparison of the care  
9       provided under the pilot program and the clinical care  
10      model of the Department.

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