

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO S. 2248
OFFERED BY Mr. Roe

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

2 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
3 “Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018”.

4 (b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents for
5 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—EDUCATION

Sec. 101. Inclusion of certain additional periods of active duty service for purposes of suspension of charges to entitlement during periods of suspended participation in Department of Veterans Affairs vocational rehabilitation programs.

Sec. 102. Provision of monthly housing stipend information under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 103. Disapproval for purposes of educational assistance programs of Department of Veterans Affairs of certain courses of education that do not permit individuals to attend or participate in courses pending payment.

Sec. 104. Provision of information on required additional actions to allow individuals to stay enrolled in courses of education pending receipt of educational assistance from department of veterans affairs.

Sec. 105. Calculation of monthly housing stipend under high technology pilot program based on location of campus where veteran attends classes.

Sec. 106. Clarification regarding applicability of authority to use educational assistance to pursue independent study programs at certain educational institutions that are not institutions of higher learning.

TITLE II—MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

- Sec. 201. Eligibility of spouses and children of veterans buried in tribal cemeteries for certain Department of Veterans Affairs burial benefits.
- Sec. 202. Department of Veterans Affairs provision of headstones and markers for, and interment in national cemeteries of, spouses and dependent children of members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty.

TITLE III—CIVIL RELIEF

- Sec. 301. Termination of leases of premises of deceased servicemembers who die while in military service.
- Sec. 302. Residence of spouses of servicemembers for tax purposes.
- Sec. 303. Residence of spouses of servicemembers for voting.
- Sec. 304. Termination of multichannel video programming and internet access service contracts.

TITLE IV—TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

- Sec. 401. Study of community-based transition assistance programs for members of the Armed Forces after separation, retirement, or discharge.

TITLE V—DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

- Sec. 501. Misuse of Department of Veterans Affairs purchase cards by Department employees.
- Sec. 502. Updating dependent information.
- Sec. 503. Oversight of Electronic Health Record Modernization Program.
- Sec. 504. Department of Veterans Affairs notice relating to debt collection activities.

TITLE VI—MEDICAL FACILITIES

- Sec. 601. Authorization of major medical facility projects for fiscal year 2019.
- Sec. 602. Plans to improve medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE VII—OTHER MATTERS

- Sec. 701. Homeless veterans reintegration programs.
- Sec. 702. Technical corrections.
- Sec. 703. Medical Surgical Prime Vendor program.
- Sec. 704. Report on expanding access to dental care for veterans eligible for health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

1 **TITLE I—EDUCATION**

2 **SEC. 101. INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ADDITIONAL PERIODS**

3 **OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE FOR PURPOSES OF**

4 **SUSPENSION OF CHARGES TO ENTITLEMENT**

5 **DURING PERIODS OF SUSPENDED PARTICI-**

6 **PATION IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**

7 **FAIRS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PRO-**

8 **GRAMS.**

9 Section 3105(e)(2) of title 38, United States Code,
10 is amended by striking “or 12304” and inserting “12304,
11 12304a, or 12304b”.

12 **SEC. 102. PROVISION OF MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND IN-**

13 **FORMATION UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL**

14 **ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

15 Section 3313 of title 38, United States Code, is
16 amended by adding at the end the following new sub-
17 section:

18 “(k) **PROVISION OF HOUSING STIPEND PAYMENT IN-**

19 **FORMATION.—**

20 “(1) **IN GENERAL.—**The Secretary shall furnish
21 to individuals receiving educational assistance under
22 this chapter documentation that verifies the amount
23 of the monthly housing stipend the individual re-
24 ceives under this section.

1 “(2) MANNER.—The Secretary shall make such
2 documentation available to the individual using an
3 internet website in the same manner the Secretary
4 provides documentation verifying compensation and
5 other benefits furnished by the Secretary to individ-
6 uals.”.

7 **SEC. 103. DISAPPROVAL FOR PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL**
8 **ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF**
9 **VETERANS AFFAIRS OF CERTAIN COURSES**
10 **OF EDUCATION THAT DO NOT PERMIT INDI-**
11 **VIDUALS TO ATTEND OR PARTICIPATE IN**
12 **COURSES PENDING PAYMENT.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679 of title 38, United
14 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
15 lowing new subsection:

16 “(e)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this
17 chapter, beginning on August 1, 2019, a State approving
18 agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the
19 State approving agency, shall disapprove a course of edu-
20 cation provided by an educational institution that has in
21 effect a policy that is inconsistent with any of the fol-
22 lowing:

23 “(A) A policy that permits any covered indi-
24 vidual to attend or participate in the course of edu-
25 cation during the period beginning on the date on

1 which the individual provides to the educational in-
2 stitution a certificate of eligibility for entitlement to
3 educational assistance under chapter 31 or 33 of
4 this title and ending on the earlier of the following
5 dates:

6 “(i) The date on which the Secretary pro-
7 vides payment for such course of education to
8 such institution.

9 “(ii) The date that is 90 days after the
10 date on which the educational institution cer-
11 tifies for tuition and fees following receipt from
12 the student such certificate of eligibility.

13 “(B) A policy that ensures that the educational
14 institution will not impose any penalty, including the
15 assessment of late fees, the denial of access to class-
16 es, libraries, or other institutional facilities, or the
17 requirement that a covered individual borrow addi-
18 tional funds, on any covered individual because of
19 the individual’s inability to meet his or her financial
20 obligations to the institution due to the delayed dis-
21 bursement of a payment to be provided by the Sec-
22 retary under chapter 31 or 33 of this title.

23 “(2) For purposes of this subsection, a covered indi-
24 vidual is any individual who is entitled to educational as-
25 sistance under chapter 31 or 33 of this title.

1 “(3) The Secretary may waive such requirements of
2 paragraph (1) as the Secretary considers appropriate.

3 “(4) It shall not be inconsistent with a policy de-
4 scribed in paragraph (1) for an educational institution to
5 require a covered individual to take the following addi-
6 tional actions:

7 “(A) Submit a certificate of eligibility for enti-
8 tlement to educational assistance not later than the
9 first day of a course of education for which the indi-
10 vidual has indicated the individual wishes to use the
11 individual’s entitlement to educational assistance.

12 “(B) Submit a written request to use such enti-
13 tlement.

14 “(C) Provide additional information necessary
15 to the proper certification of enrollment by the edu-
16 cational institution.”.

17 (b) PROMPT PAYMENTS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
19 Affairs shall take such actions as may be necessary
20 to ensure that the Secretary makes a payment to an
21 educational institution on behalf of an individual,
22 who is entitled to educational assistance under chap-
23 ter 31 or 33 of title 38, United States Code, and
24 who is using such assistance to pursue a program of
25 education at the educational institution, not later

1 than 60 days after the date on which the educational
2 institution certifies to the Secretary the applicable
3 tuition and fees for the individual.

4 (2) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than
5 May 1 and October 1 of each year, the Secretary
6 shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
7 of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Af-
8 fairs of the House of Representatives a semiannual
9 report summarizing any cases in which the Secretary
10 failed to make a payment described in paragraph (1)
11 within the period set forth in such paragraph and an
12 explanation for each delayed disbursement of pay-
13 ment.

14 (c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—In a case in which an
15 individual is unable to meet a financial obligation to an
16 educational institution due to the delayed disbursement of
17 a payment to be provided by the Secretary under chapter
18 31 or 33 of such title and the amount of such disburse-
19 ment is less than anticipated, nothing in section 3679(e)
20 of such title, as added by subsection (a), shall be construed
21 to prohibit an educational institution from requiring addi-
22 tional payment or imposing a fee for the amount that is
23 the difference between the amount of the financial obliga-
24 tion and the amount of the disbursement.

1 **SEC. 104. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON REQUIRED AD-**
2 **DITIONAL ACTIONS TO ALLOW INDIVIDUALS**
3 **TO STAY ENROLLED IN COURSES OF EDU-**
4 **CATION PENDING RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL**
5 **ASSISTANCE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
6 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

7 Section 3698(c)(1)(C) of title 38, United States
8 Code, is amended—

9 (1) in clause (x), by striking “; and” and insert-
10 ing a semicolon;

11 (2) in clause (xi), by striking the period at the
12 end and inserting “; and”; and

13 (3) by adding at the end the following new
14 clause:

15 “(xii) information on whether the institu-
16 tion requires a covered individual to take addi-
17 tional action pursuant to section 3679(e)(4) of
18 this title to stay enrolled in a course pending
19 receipt of educational assistance under a law
20 administered by the Secretary.”.

1 **SECTION 105. CALCULATION OF MONTHLY HOUSING STI-**
2 **PEND UNDER HIGH TECHNOLOGY PILOT**
3 **PROGRAM BASED ON LOCATION OF CAMPUS**
4 **WHERE VETERAN ATTENDS CLASSES.**

5 Section 116(d)(1) of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans
6 Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–48,
7 38 U.S.C. 3001 (note)), is amended—

8 (1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “the insti-
9 tution at which the individual is enrolled” and in-
10 sserting “the campus of the institution where the in-
11 dividual physically participates in a majority of
12 classes”; and

13 (2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “the
14 amount payable” and all that follows through “sub-
15 paragraph (A)” and inserting “the national average
16 of the monthly amount of the basic allowance for
17 housing payable under section 403 of title 37,
18 United States Code, for a member with dependents
19 in pay grade E–5”.

1 **SEC. 106. CLARIFICATION REGARDING APPLICABILITY OF**
2 **AUTHORITY TO USE EDUCATIONAL ASSIST-**
3 **ANCE TO PURSUE INDEPENDENT STUDY PRO-**
4 **GRAMS AT CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL INSTITU-**
5 **TIONS THAT ARE NOT INSTITUTIONS OF**
6 **HIGHER LEARNING.**

7 The section heading for section 302 of the Harry W.
8 Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017
9 (Public Law 115–48; 131 Stat. 990) is amended to read
10 as follows (and the table of contents for such Act is con-
11 formed accordingly):

12 **“SEC. 302. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF EDUCATIONAL AS-**
13 **SISTANCE UNDER ANY OF THE EDUCATIONAL**
14 **ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPART-**
15 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PURSUE**
16 **INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAMS AT CER-**
17 **TAIN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE**
18 **NOT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.”.**

19 **TITLE II—MEMORIAL AFFAIRS**

20 **SEC. 201. ELIGIBILITY OF SPOUSES AND CHILDREN OF VET-**
21 **ERANS BURIED IN TRIBAL CEMETERIES FOR**
22 **CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
23 **FAIRS BURIAL BENEFITS.**

24 Section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, is
25 amended—

1 (1) in subsection (a)(4), by inserting “or a vet-
2 erans’ cemetery owned by a tribal organization or on
3 land owned by or held in trust for a tribal organiza-
4 tion” after “State”;

5 (2) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting “, a vet-
6 erans’ cemetery of a tribal organization or on land
7 owned by or held in trust for a tribal organization”
8 after “owned by a State”;

9 (3) in subsection (f)—

10 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and
11 (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

12 (B) by striking “The Secretary” and in-
13 serting “(1) The Secretary”;

14 (C) by striking “a national cemetery or in
15 a veterans cemetery of a State or tribal organi-
16 zation for which the Department has provided
17 a grant under section 2408 of this title” and in-
18 serting “a covered cemetery”; and

19 (D) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(2) The term ‘covered cemetery’ means any of the
21 following:

22 “(A) A national cemetery.

23 “(B) A veterans’ cemetery of a State for which
24 the Department has provided a grant under section
25 2408 of this title.

1 “(C) A veterans’ cemetery of a tribal organiza-
2 tion or on land owned by or held in trust for a tribal
3 organization for which the Department has provided
4 a grant under subsection (f) of such section.”; and

5 (4) by adding at the end the following new sub-
6 section:

7 “(i) In this section, the term ‘tribal organization’ has
8 the meaning given such term in section 3765 of this
9 title.”.

10 **SEC. 202. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVISION**
11 **OF HEADSTONES AND MARKERS FOR, AND IN-**
12 **TERMENT IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES OF,**
13 **SPOUSES AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF**
14 **MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES SERVING**
15 **ON ACTIVE DUTY.**

16 (a) HEADSTONES AND MARKERS.—Section
17 2306(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

18 (1) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “, or the
19 spouse of a member of the Armed Forces serving on
20 active duty under conditions other than dishonor-
21 able, as shown by a statement from a general court-
22 martial convening authority, at the time of the
23 spouse’s death if such death occurs before October
24 1, 2024” after “veteran”; and

1 (2) in subparagraph (C), by inserting “, or the
2 eligible dependent child of a member of the Armed
3 Forces serving on active duty under conditions other
4 than dishonorable, as shown by a statement from a
5 general court-martial convening authority, at the
6 time of the child’s death if such death occurs before
7 October 1, 2024” after “veteran”.

8 (b) INTERMENT IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES.—Sec-
9 tion 2402(a)(5) of such title is amended by inserting “,
10 and the spouse, minor child, and, in the discretion of the
11 Secretary, unmarried adult child of a member of the
12 Armed Forces serving on active duty under conditions
13 other than dishonorable, as shown by a statement from
14 a general court-martial convening authority, at the time
15 of the spouse’s or child’s death if such death occurs before
16 October 1, 2024” after “paragraph (7)”.

17 **TITLE III—CIVIL RELIEF**

18 **SEC. 301. TERMINATION OF LEASES OF PREMISES OF DE-** 19 **CEASED SERVICEMEMBERS WHO DIE WHILE** 20 **IN MILITARY SERVICE.**

21 Section 305(a) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act
22 (50 U.S.C. 3955) is amended—

23 (1) in the subsection heading, by striking “BY
24 LESSEE”;

1 (2) in the heading for paragraph (1), by strik-
2 ing “IN GENERAL” and inserting “TERMINATION BY
3 LESSEE”; and

4 (3) by adding at the end the following new
5 paragraph:

6 “(3) DEATH OF LESSEE.—The spouse of the
7 lessee on a lease described in subsection (b)(1) may
8 terminate the lease during the one-year period begin-
9 ning on the date of the death of the lessee, if the
10 lessee dies while in military service or while per-
11 forming full-time National Guard duty, active Guard
12 and Reserve duty, or inactive-duty training (as such
13 terms are defined in section 101(d) of title 10,
14 United States Code).”.

15 **SEC. 302. RESIDENCE OF SPOUSES OF SERVICEMEMBERS**
16 **FOR TAX PURPOSES.**

17 (a) RESIDENCE FOR TAX PURPOSES.—Section
18 511(a)(2) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50
19 U.S.C. 4001(a)(2)) is amended—

20 (1) by striking “A spouse” and inserting the
21 following:

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A spouse”; and

23 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
24 paragraph:

1 “(B) ELECTION.—For any taxable year of
2 the marriage, the spouse of a servicemember
3 may elect to use the same residence for pur-
4 poses of taxation as the servicemember regard-
5 less of the date on which the marriage of the
6 spouse and the servicemember occurred.”.

7 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by sub-
8 section (a) shall apply with respect to any return of State
9 or local income tax filed for any taxable year beginning
10 with the taxable year that includes the date of the enact-
11 ment of this Act.

12 **SEC. 303. RESIDENCE OF SPOUSES OF SERVICEMEMBERS**
13 **FOR VOTING.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 705(b) of the
15 Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 4025(b)) is
16 amended—

17 (1) by striking “State or local office” and all
18 that follows through the period at the end of para-
19 graph (3) and inserting “State or local office—”;
20 and

21 (2) by adding at the end the following new
22 paragraphs:

23 “(1) a person who is absent from a State be-
24 cause the person is accompanying the person’s
25 spouse who is absent from that same State in com-

1 pliance with military or naval orders shall not, solely
2 by reason of that absence—

3 “(A) be deemed to have lost a residence or
4 domicile in that State, without regard to wheth-
5 er or not the person intends to return to that
6 State;

7 “(B) be deemed to have acquired a resi-
8 dence or domicile in any other State; or

9 “(C) be deemed to have become a resident
10 in or a resident of any other State; and

11 “(2) the spouse of a servicemember may elect
12 to use the same residence as the servicemember re-
13 gardless of the date on which the marriage of the
14 spouse and the servicemember occurred.”.

15 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
16 subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 90 days
17 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

18 **SEC. 304. TERMINATION OF MULTICHANNEL VIDEO PRO-**
19 **GRAMMING AND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE**
20 **CONTRACTS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 305A of the
22 Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 3956) is
23 amended—

1 (1) in the section heading, by inserting “, **MUL-**
2 **TICHANNEL VIDEO PROGRAMMING, AND**
3 **INTERNET ACCESS**” after “**TELEPHONE**”;

4 (2) in subsection (b), by striking “cellular tele-
5 phone service or telephone exchange service” and in-
6 serting “commercial mobile service, telephone ex-
7 change service, internet access service, or multi-
8 channel video programming service”;

9 (3) in subsection (c), by inserting “for commer-
10 cial mobile service or telephone exchange service” be-
11 fore “terminated”;

12 (4) in subsection (d), in the matter preceding
13 paragraph (1), by striking “cellular telephone serv-
14 ice” and inserting “commercial mobile service”;

15 (5) in subsection (e)—

16 (A) by striking “For any” and inserting
17 the following:

18 “(1) IN GENERAL.—For any”;

19 (B) by striking “If the” and inserting the
20 following:

21 “(2) REINSTATEMENT OF SERVICE.—If the”;

22 and

23 (C) by adding at the end the following:

24 “(3) RETURN OF PROVIDER-OWNED EQUIP-
25 MENT.—If a servicemember terminates a contract

1 under subsection (a), the servicemember shall return
2 any provider-owned consumer premises equipment to
3 the service provider not later than 10 days after the
4 date on which service is disconnected.”; and

5 (6) in subsection (g)—

6 (A) by redesignating paragraph (2) as
7 paragraph (4); and

8 (B) by striking paragraph (1) and insert-
9 ing the following:

10 “(1) The term ‘commercial mobile service’ has
11 the meaning given that term in section 332(d) of the
12 Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d)).

13 “(2) The term ‘multichannel video program-
14 ming service’ means a subscription video service of-
15 fered by a multichannel video programming dis-
16 tributor, as that term is defined in section 602 of
17 the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 522),
18 over a system the distributor owns or controls.

19 “(3) The term ‘provider-owned consumer prem-
20 ises equipment’ means any equipment that a pro-
21 vider of internet access service or multichannel video
22 programming service rents or loans to a customer
23 during the provision of that service, including gate-
24 ways, routers, cable modems, voice-capable modems,

1 CableCARDS, converters, digital adapters, remote
2 controls, and any other equipment provided.”.

3 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

4 (1) TITLE HEADING.—The heading for title III
5 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act is amended
6 by striking “**TELEPHONE**” and inserting
7 “**COMMUNICATIONS**”.

8 (2) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of con-
9 tents in section 1(b) of the Servicemembers Civil Re-
10 lief Act is amended—

11 (A) by striking the item relating to title III
12 and inserting the following new item:

“TITLE III—RENT, INSTALLMENT CONTRACTS, MORTGAGES,
LIENS, ASSIGNMENT, LEASES, COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE CON-
TRACTS”;

13 and

14 (B) by striking the item relating to section
15 305A and inserting the following new item:

“Sec. 305A. Termination of telephone, multichannel video programming, and
internet access service contracts.”.

1 **TITLE IV—TRANSITION**
2 **ASSISTANCE**

3 **SEC. 401. STUDY OF COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSITION AS-**
4 **SISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR MEMBERS OF THE**
5 **ARMED FORCES AFTER SEPARATION, RE-**
6 **TIREMENT, OR DISCHARGE.**

7 (a) **STUDY.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in
8 consultation with State entities that serve members of the
9 Armed Forces who are retired, separated, or discharged
10 from the Armed Forces, shall enter into an agreement
11 with an appropriate non-Federal entity to carry out a
12 study to identify community-based programs—

13 (1) that provide transition assistance to such
14 members; and

15 (2) operated by nonprofit entities.

16 (b) **TRANSMISSION TO MEMBERS.**—The Secretary of
17 Veterans Affairs shall transmit the list of programs identi-
18 fied under this section to the Secretary of Defense so the
19 Secretaries of the military departments may provide infor-
20 mation in the list to members of the Armed Forces who
21 participate in the Transition Assistance Program under
22 sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code.

23 (c) **ONLINE PUBLICATION.**—The Secretary of Vet-
24 erans Affairs shall publish the most recent version of the

1 list of programs identified under this section on a public
2 website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

3 **TITLE V—DEPARTMENTAL**
4 **ADMINISTRATION**

5 **SEC. 501. MISUSE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**
6 **PURCHASE CARDS BY DEPARTMENT EMPLOY-**
7 **EES.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 7 of title
9 38, United States Code, is further amended by adding at
10 the end the following new section:

11 **“§ 728. Misuse of Department purchase cards**

12 “(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary shall prohibit
13 any employee of the Department who the Secretary or the
14 Inspector General of the Department determines has
15 knowingly misused a purchase card from serving as a pur-
16 chase card holder or approving official.

17 “(2) Such a prohibition shall be in addition to any
18 other applicable penalty.

19 “(b) MISUSE.—For purposes of this section, the term
20 ‘misuse’ means—

21 “(1) splitting purchases;

22 “(2) exceeding applicable purchase card limits
23 or purchase thresholds;

24 “(3) purchasing any unauthorized item;

1 “(4) using a purchase card without being an
2 authorized purchase card holder; or

3 “(5) violating ethics standards.”.

4 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
5 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
6 after the item relating to section 728 the following new
7 item:

 “728. Misuse of Department purchase cards.”.

8 **SEC. 502. UPDATING DEPENDENT INFORMATION.**

9 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make such
10 changes to such information technology systems of the De-
11 partment of Veterans Affairs, including the eBenefits sys-
12 tem or successor system, as may be necessary so that
13 whenever the Secretary records in such systems informa-
14 tion about a dependent of a person, the person is able to
15 review and revise such information.

16 **SEC. 503. OVERSIGHT OF ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD**
17 **MODERNIZATION PROGRAM.**

18 (a) PROGRAM DOCUMENTS.—Not later than 30 days
19 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
20 of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate con-
21 gressional committees the following documents concerning
22 the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program:

23 (1) Integrated Master Plan.

24 (2) Integrated Master Schedule.

25 (3) Program Management Plan.

- 1 (4) Annual and lifecycle cost estimates, includ-
- 2 ing, at a minimum, cost elements relating to—
- 3 (A) Federal Government labor;
- 4 (B) contractor labor;
- 5 (C) hardware;
- 6 (D) software; and
- 7 (E) testing and evaluation.
- 8 (5) Cost baseline.
- 9 (6) Risk Management Plan.
- 10 (7) Health IT Strategic Architecture Plan.
- 11 (8) Transition Plan for implementing updated
- 12 architecture.
- 13 (9) Data Migration Plan.
- 14 (10) System and Data Security Plan.
- 15 (11) Application Implementation Plan.
- 16 (12) System Design Documents.
- 17 (13) Legacy Veterans Information Systems and
- 18 Technology Architecture Standardization, Security
- 19 Enhancement, and Consolidation Project Plan.
- 20 (14) Health Data Interoperability Management
- 21 Plan.
- 22 (15) Community Care Vision and Implementa-
- 23 tion Plan, including milestones and a detailed de-
- 24 scription of how complete interoperability with non-
- 25 Department health care providers will be achieved.

1 (b) QUARTERLY UPDATES.—Not later than 30 days
2 after the end of each fiscal quarter during the period be-
3 ginning with the fiscal quarter in which this Act is enacted
4 and ending on the date on which the Electronic Health
5 Record Modernization Program is completed, the Sec-
6 retary shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
7 mittees the most recent updated versions, if any exist, of
8 the following documents:

9 (1) Integrated Master Schedule.

10 (2) Program Management Plan, including any
11 written Program Management Review material de-
12 veloped for the Program Management Plan during
13 the fiscal quarter covered by the submission.

14 (3) Each document described in subsection
15 (a)(4).

16 (4) Performance Baseline Report for the fiscal
17 quarter covered by the submission or for the fiscal
18 quarter ending the fiscal year prior to the submis-
19 sion.

20 (5) Budget Reconciliation Report.

21 (6) Risk Management Plan and Risk Register.

22 (c) CONTRACTS.—Not later than 5 days after award-
23 ing a contract, order, or agreement, including any modi-
24 fications thereto, under the Electronic Health Record
25 Modernization Program, the Secretary shall submit to the

1 appropriate congressional committees a copy of the entire
2 such contract, order, agreement, or modification.

3 (d) NOTIFICATION.—

4 (1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 10 days
5 after an event described in paragraph (2) occurs, the
6 Secretary shall notify the appropriate congressional
7 committees of such occurrence, including a descrip-
8 tion of the event and an explanation for why such
9 event occurred.

10 (2) EVENT DESCRIBED.—An event described in
11 this paragraph is any of the following events regard-
12 ing the Electronic Health Record Modernization
13 Program:

14 (A) The delay of any milestone or deliver-
15 able by 30 or more days.

16 (B) A request for equitable adjustment, eq-
17 uitable adjustment, or change order exceeding
18 \$1,000,000 (as such terms are defined in the
19 Federal Acquisition Regulation).

20 (C) The submission of any protest, claim,
21 or dispute, and the resolution of any protest,
22 claim, or dispute (as such terms are defined in
23 the Federal Acquisition Regulation).

24 (D) A loss of clinical or other data.

1 (E) A breach of patient privacy, including
2 any—

3 (i) disclosure of protected health in-
4 formation that is not permitted under reg-
5 ulations promulgated under section 264(c)
6 of the Health Insurance Portability and
7 Accountability Act of 1996 (Public Law
8 104–191; 42 U.S.C. 1320d–2 note); and

9 (ii) breach of sensitive personal infor-
10 mation (as defined in section 5727 of title
11 38, United States Code).

12 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

13 (1) The term “appropriate congressional com-
14 mittees” means—

15 (A) the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of
16 the House of Representatives and the Senate;
17 and

18 (B) the Committees on Appropriations of
19 the House of Representatives and the Senate.

20 (2) The term “Electronic Health Record Mod-
21 ernization Program” means—

22 (A) any activities by the Department of
23 Veterans Affairs to procure or implement an
24 electronic health or medical record system to re-
25 place any or all of the Veterans Information

1 Systems and Technology Architecture, the Com-
2 puterized Patient Record System, the Joint
3 Legacy Viewer, or the Enterprise Health Man-
4 agement Platform; and

5 (B) any contracts or agreements entered
6 into by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to
7 carry out, support, or analyze the activities
8 under subparagraph (A).

9 **SEC. 504. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NOTICE RE-**
10 **LATING TO DEBT COLLECTION ACTIVITIES.**

11 (a) DEBT NOTIFICATION LETTER FORMATS.—The
12 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall collaborate with vet-
13 erans service organizations to develop a standard format
14 for any letter provided to an individual who the Secretary
15 determines is indebted to the United States by virtue of
16 such individual's participation in a benefits program ad-
17 ministered by the Secretary. Such letter shall be written
18 in plain language and shall include a notice of the debt
19 and a clear explanation of—

20 (1) why the individual is indebted to the United
21 States by virtue of such person's participation in a
22 benefits program administered by the Secretary; and

23 (2) the options available to the individual.

24 (b) DELIVERY OF DEBT NOTICES BY STANDARD
25 MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MEANS.—The Secretary shall de-

1 develop a method by which individuals may elect to receive
2 notice of debt by electronic means and shall ensure, to the
3 extent practicable, that the letter developed under sub-
4 section (a) is delivered—

5 (1) by both standard mail and by electronic
6 means to intended recipients who have made such an
7 election; and

8 (2) only by standard mail to intended recipients
9 who have not made such an election.

10 (c) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—

11 (1) NOTICES OF COMPLETION.—Upon comple-
12 tion of the development of the standard letter format
13 required under subsection (a) and upon completion
14 of development of the method by which individuals
15 may elect to receive notice of debt by electronic
16 means under subsection (b), the Secretary shall sub-
17 mit to Congress notice of the completion of the re-
18 spective development.

19 (2) PROGRESS REPORTS.—If the Secretary has
20 not submitted each notice required by paragraph (1)
21 by the date that is 90 days after the date of the en-
22 actment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

23 (A) submit to Congress a report describing
24 the progress of the Secretary toward imple-
25 menting subsections (a) and (b) and an expla-

1 nation for why the respective development has
2 not been completed; and

3 (B) every 30 days thereafter until all of
4 the notices required by paragraph (1) have been
5 submitted, submit to Congress an update to the
6 report under subparagraph (A) that includes an
7 additional explanation for the failure to com-
8 plete the respective development.

9 (d) STUDY AND REPORT.—

10 (1) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs,
11 in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury,
12 shall conduct a study on the process by which indi-
13 viduals who are indebted to the United States by vir-
14 tue of their participation in a benefits program ad-
15 ministered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs are
16 notified of debt collection efforts relating to such in-
17 debtedness.

18 (2) ELEMENTS.—The study required by para-
19 graph (1) shall include the following:

20 (A) An analysis of the scope of the prob-
21 lem of individuals who are indebted to the
22 United States by virtue of their participation in
23 a benefits program administered by the Sec-
24 retary of Veterans Affairs not receiving debt
25 collection notices relating to such indebtedness.

1 (B) Identification of administrative actions
2 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Sec-
3 retary of the Treasury can carry out to reduce
4 the number of incorrect or unknown addresses
5 of such individuals in the databases of the De-
6 partment Veterans Affairs and the Department
7 of the Treasury and a timeline for carrying out
8 such actions.

9 (C) An estimate of the costs associated
10 with sending debt collection notices to such in-
11 dividuals by certified mail.

12 (D) An analysis of whether, or to what ex-
13 tent, sending debt collection notices to such in-
14 dividuals by certified mail would address the
15 problem analyzed under subparagraph (A).

16 (E) An analysis of the requirements and
17 resources that would be necessary for the Sec-
18 retary of Veterans Affairs to establish a method
19 for the Secretary to display in one consolidated
20 document the details regarding all of the debts
21 of an individual to the United States by virtue
22 of such individual's participation in a benefits
23 program administered by the Secretary.

24 (F) An analysis of the extent to which
25 such individuals are so indebted by reason of

1 actions by the Secretary or by actions of the in-
2 dividual, including any trends relating to wheth-
3 er the actions of the individual may be by rea-
4 son of error, misrepresentation, or fraud.

5 (3) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
7 Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary
8 of the Treasury, shall submit to Congress a report
9 on the findings of the Secretaries with respect to the
10 study conducted under paragraph (1).

11 **TITLE VI—MEDICAL FACILITIES**

12 **SEC. 601. AUTHORIZATION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY** 13 **PROJECTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
15 may carry out the following major medical facility projects
16 in fiscal year 2019 at the locations specified and in an
17 amount for each project not to exceed the amount speci-
18 fied for such location:

19 (1) Construction of a community living center
20 and renovation of domiciliary and outpatient facili-
21 ties in Canandaigua, New York, in an amount not
22 to exceed \$351,980,000 (an increase of
23 \$193,000,000 as compared to the previous author-
24 ization for such project).

1 (2) Renovation of space for a simulation train-
2 ing education center in North Chicago, Illinois, in an
3 amount not to exceed \$15,980,000.

4 (3) Construction of a surgical intensive care
5 unit and renovation to expand the operating room
6 suite in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in an amount
7 not to exceed \$29,461,000.

8 (4) Construction of a new medical facility in
9 Louisville, Kentucky, in an amount not to exceed
10 \$450,000,000 (an increase of \$300,000,000 as com-
11 pared to the previous authorization for such
12 project).

13 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
14 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans
15 Affairs for fiscal year 2019 or the year in which funds
16 are appropriated for the Construction, Major Projects ac-
17 count, \$847,421,000 for the projects authorized in sub-
18 section (a).

19 **SEC. 602. PLANS TO IMPROVE MEDICAL FACILITIES OF THE**
20 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

21 (a) PLANS REQUIRED.—

22 (1) PLANS OF DIRECTORS OF MEDICAL FACILI-
23 TIES.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the
24 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Af-
25 fairs shall require each director of a medical facility

1 of the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit to
2 the director of the Veterans Integrated Service Net-
3 work that covers the facility a plan to improve such
4 facility.

5 (2) PLANS OF DIRECTORS OF VETERANS INTE-
6 GRATED SERVICE NETWORKS.—The Secretary shall
7 require each director of a Veterans Integrated Serv-
8 ice Network to submit to the Secretary, not later
9 than 60 days after receiving all of the plans under
10 paragraph (1), a plan, based on the plans received
11 under paragraph (1), to improve the facilities within
12 that Veterans Integrated Service Network in such a
13 fashion that would improve the ability of all facilities
14 within that network to provide the best and most ef-
15 ficient care to patients.

16 (b) REGULAR REPORTS.—The Secretary shall ensure
17 that each director of a Veterans Integrated Service Net-
18 work submits to the Secretary, not later than two years
19 after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less
20 frequently than once every two years thereafter, a report
21 on the actions taken by the director to improve the facili-
22 ties within that Veterans Integrated Service Network and
23 what further such actions might be necessary.

24 (c) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON USE OF AUTHORITIES
25 TO INVESTIGATE MEDICAL CENTERS OF THE DEPART-

1 MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—It is the sense of Con-
2 gress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should make
3 full use of the authorities provided by section 2 of the En-
4 hancing Veteran Care Act (Public Law 115–95; 38 U.S.C.
5 1701 note).

6 **TITLE VII—OTHER MATTERS**

7 **SEC. 701. HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PRO-** 8 **GRAMS.**

9 Section 2021(a) of title 38, United States Code, is
10 amended—

11 (1) by striking “reintegration of homeless vet-
12 erans into the labor force.” and inserting the fol-
13 lowing: “reintegration into the labor force of—”;
14 and

15 (2) by adding at the end the following new
16 paragraphs:

17 “(1) homeless veterans (including veterans who
18 were homeless but found housing during the 60-day
19 period preceding the date on which the veteran be-
20 gins to participate in a program under this section);

21 “(2) veterans participating in the Department
22 of Veterans Affairs supported housing program for
23 which rental assistance is provided pursuant to sec-
24 tion 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of
25 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) or the Tribal HUD–

1 VA Supportive Housing (Tribal HUD–VASH) pro-
2 gram;

3 “(3) Indians who are veterans and receiving as-
4 sistance under the Native American Housing Assist-
5 ance and Self Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C.
6 4101 et seq.);

7 “(4) veterans described in section 2023(e) of
8 this title or any other veterans who are transitioning
9 from being incarcerated; and

10 “(5) veterans participating in the Department
11 of Veterans Affairs rapid rehousing and prevention
12 program authorized in section 2044 of this title.”.

13 **SEC. 702. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.**

14 (a) TITLE 38.—Title 38, United States Code, is
15 amended as follows:

16 (1) In the table of sections at the beginning of
17 chapter 55, by inserting a period at the end of the
18 item relating to section 5501A.

19 (2) In section 7463(c)(2)(B), by striking “to
20 answer to answer” and inserting “to answer”.

21 (b) VETERANS’ BENEFITS IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF
22 1996.—Section 504 of the Veterans’ Benefits Improve-
23 ments Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–275; 38 U.S.C. 5101
24 note) is amended by redesignating the second subsection
25 (c) as subsection (d).

1 **SEC. 703. MEDICAL SURGICAL PRIME VENDOR PROGRAM.**

2 (a) VENDORS.—In procuring certain medical, sur-
3 gical, and dental supplies or laboratory supplies for med-
4 ical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the
5 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out the Medical
6 Surgical Prime Vendor program, or successor program, in
7 a manner that—

8 (1) requires the Secretary to award contracts to
9 multiple regional prime vendors instead of a single
10 nationwide prime vendor; and

11 (2) prohibits a prime vendor from solely design-
12 ing the formulary of such supplies.

13 (b) CLINICALLY DRIVEN SOURCING.—

14 (1) EXPERTISE.—In carrying out the formulary
15 of supplies under the Medical Surgical Prime Vendor
16 program, or successor program, the Secretary shall
17 ensure that each employee of the Department of
18 Veterans Affairs who conducts formulary analyses or
19 makes decisions with respect to including items on
20 the formulary has medical expertise relevant to the
21 items for which the employee conducts such analyses
22 or makes such decisions.

23 (2) LISTS.—Not later than 30 days after the
24 date of the enactment of this Act, and every six
25 months thereafter with respect to any updates, the
26 Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Vet-

1 erans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and
2 the Senate a list of each employee described in para-
3 graph (1) and the relevant medical expertise of the
4 employee, listed by the categories of items in the for-
5 mulary described in such paragraph.

6 **SEC. 704. REPORT ON EXPANDING ACCESS TO DENTAL**
7 **CARE FOR VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH**
8 **CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
9 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 360 days after the
11 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
12 erans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans'
13 Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Af-
14 fairs of the House of Representatives a report on the feasi-
15 bility and advisability of expanding access to dental care
16 for eligible veterans.

17 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection
18 (a) shall include the following:

19 (1) An analysis of access to dental care for eli-
20 gible veterans outside of the Department, includ-
21 ing—

22 (A) the percentage of eligible veterans cur-
23 rently enrolled in dental insurance through a
24 third-party payer, including—

1 (i) the dental insurance plan for vet-
2 erans and survivors and dependents of vet-
3 erans under section 1712C of title 38,
4 United States Code;

5 (ii) the Medicaid program under title
6 XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
7 1396 et seq.); and

8 (iii) employer-sponsored dental insur-
9 ance;

10 (B) the affordability of dental insurance
11 described in subparagraph (A); and

12 (C) the comprehensiveness of benefits of
13 dental insurance described in subparagraph (A).

14 (2) An analysis of the current oral health needs
15 of eligible veterans, including an estimate of the
16 number of eligible veterans who—

17 (A) experience untreated cavities or decay;

18 (B) require dentures, implants, or other re-
19 storative dental services; or

20 (C) have not received regular dental
21 cleanings within the two-year period preceding
22 the report.

23 (3) An analysis of the financial impact to the
24 Department of Veterans Affairs of providing dental
25 care to eligible veterans, including—

1 (A) whether the provision of such services
2 would result in a reduction in total health care
3 costs;

4 (B) a cost-benefit analysis that indicates
5 potential cost savings to the Department over a
6 5-, 10-, and 20-year period; and

7 (C) projected cost savings to the Depart-
8 ment and across the broader health care sys-
9 tem.

10 (4) An analysis of the number and types of den-
11 tal providers necessary to treat eligible veterans, in-
12 cluding—

13 (A) dentists;

14 (B) hygienists;

15 (C) dental technicians; and

16 (D) dental therapists.

17 (c) CATEGORIES OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS.—The re-
18 port required by subsection (a) shall be disaggregated by
19 each of the following categories of eligible veterans:

20 (1) Veterans enrolled in the system of annual
21 patient enrollment of the Department pursuant to
22 the priority group under subsection (a)(6) of section
23 1705 of such title.

1 (2) Veterans enrolled in such system pursuant
2 to the priority group under subsection (a)(5) of such
3 section.

4 (3) Veterans enrolled in such system pursuant
5 to a priority group under any of subsections (a)(1)
6 through (a)(4) of such section.

7 (4) Veterans enrolled in such system pursuant
8 to a priority group under subsection (a)(7) or (a)(8)
9 of such section.

10 (d) ELIGIBLE VETERANS DEFINED.—In this section,
11 the term “eligible veterans” means veterans enrolled in the
12 system of annual patient enrollment of the Department
13 of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section
14 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

