

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress reports regarding security and safety at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress reports regarding security and safety at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 “VA Medical Center
5 Security Report Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SECURITY AT COVERED FA-**
2 **CILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
3 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) ANNUAL SURVEY.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
6 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
7 nually thereafter for each of the following five years,
8 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination
9 with the Director of the Office of Security and Law
10 Enforcement of the Department of Veterans Affairs,
11 shall conduct an annual survey of covered employees
12 to collect information regarding security at each cov-
13 ered facility.

14 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each annual survey required
15 by paragraph (1) with respect to a covered facility
16 shall include questions about—

17 (A) the type and frequency of criminal ac-
18 tivity experienced at the covered facility during
19 the 12 months prior to the date the covered em-
20 ployee completes the survey;

21 (B) the number of vacant positions for De-
22 partment police officers at the covered facility
23 and the number of days each vacant position
24 has been vacant;

25 (C) the availability and adequacy of cov-
26 ered equipment;

1 (D) the availability and adequacy of re-
2 sources, classes, or other time set aside for
3 training Department police officers who work at
4 each covered facility about any skill or tactic re-
5 lated to law enforcement, including the proper
6 use of force, firearms qualifications and train-
7 ing, procedures for responding to an active
8 threat, and any other training required for De-
9 partment police officers;

10 (E) any security weakness;

11 (F) an analysis of the relationship between
12 the covered facility (including the Department
13 police officers who work at the covered facility)
14 and local law enforcement agencies;

15 (G) efforts by the personnel of the covered
16 facility to address and reduce criminal activity
17 at, or in close proximity to, the covered facility;
18 and

19 (H) recommendations for the Secretary to
20 better address and reduce criminal activity at,
21 or in close proximity to, covered facilities.

22 (b) REPORT.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
24 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
25 nually thereafter for each of the following five years,

1 the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Vet-
2 erans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on
3 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives an
4 annual report regarding security at covered facilities.

5 (2) CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under
6 paragraph (1) shall include, for the period covered
7 by the report, the following:

8 (A) The results of the annual survey re-
9 quired by subsection (a) for the year covered by
10 the report.

11 (B) An analysis, made in coordination with
12 the Director of the Office of Security and Law
13 Enforcement of such Department and each di-
14 rector and police chief of a Veterans Integrated
15 Service Network, of the results of the annual
16 survey required by subsection (a) for the year
17 covered by the report.

18 (C) A plan of action that describes how the
19 Secretary plans to address any security weak-
20 ness identified in the results of the annual sur-
21 vey and includes clearly-stated goals with meas-
22 urable benchmarks for each goal and deadlines
23 for each benchmark.

24 (D) A list of each vacant position for police
25 chief or deputy police chief at each covered fa-

1 cility, and the number of days the position has
2 been vacant.

3 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) COVERED EQUIPMENT.—The term “covered
5 equipment” means any item issued by the Secretary
6 to a Department police officer (including batons,
7 firearms, pepper spray, ballistic vests, body-worn
8 cameras, and radios) for use in the provision of serv-
9 ices under section 902 of title 38, United States
10 Code.

11 (2) COVERED EMPLOYEE.—The term “covered
12 employee” means any employee of the Department
13 who is employed at a covered facility as a police
14 chief, a facility emergency management leader, a fa-
15 cility director, or a person carrying out the respon-
16 sibilities of one of these positions in an acting capac-
17 ity.

18 (3) COVERED FACILITY.—The term “covered
19 facility” means any facility of the Department where
20 Department police officers have jurisdiction.

21 (4) DEPARTMENT POLICE OFFICER.—The term
22 “Department police officer” has the meaning given
23 to such term as used in section 902 of title 38,
24 United States Code.

1 (5) SECURITY WEAKNESS.—The term “security
2 weakness” means a deficiency in the facilities, staff-
3 ing, or covered equipment at a covered facility that
4 a covered employee of the covered facility determines
5 presents a risk to the safety of visitors or staff, in-
6 cluding an unsecured door, inoperable security cam-
7 era, unsecured police operations room, a lack of se-
8 curity presence at an entrance to the covered facil-
9 ity, and a lack of security presence in an area of the
10 covered facility or the grounds of the covered facility
11 that the director of the covered facility determines
12 requires an increased security presence.

13 **SEC. 3. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON SECURITY**
14 **AND SAFETY ISSUES AT COVERED FACILITIES**
15 **OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
16 **FAIRS.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the
18 date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General
19 of the United States shall submit to the Committee on
20 Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Vet-
21 erans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report
22 on security and safety issues at covered facilities of the
23 Department of Veterans Affairs.

24 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection
25 (a) shall examine the following:

1 (1) The ability of Department police officers
2 and other employees of the Department to respond
3 to emergencies at covered facilities of the Depart-
4 ment in a consistent and trained manner, including
5 at covered facilities in rural or highly rural areas
6 and across campuses that encompass a vast number
7 of outlying buildings.

8 (2) The challenges, both physical and organiza-
9 tional, that must be overcome by the Office of Oper-
10 ations, Security, and Preparedness of the Depart-
11 ment to ensure patient, visitor, and workforce safety.

12 (3) The quality and functionality of emergency
13 equipment furnished and available to employees at
14 covered facilities of the Department in times of need.

15 (4) The Department-wide processes and proto-
16 cols established to mitigate risks from aging build-
17 ings and systems and the emergence of new possible
18 threats.

19 (5) The level of training, familiarity, and adop-
20 tion of such processes and protocols by employees
21 throughout the Department.

22 (6) The progress made by the Department in
23 addressing the privacy, safety, and dignity of women
24 veterans at medical facilities of the Department.

1 (7) How the Department has implemented poli-
2 cies to ensure privacy and safety of women veterans
3 receiving care furnished by the Department.

4 (8) The availability and adequacy of resources,
5 classes, or other time set aside for training Depart-
6 ment police officers who work at a covered facility
7 of the Department about any skill or tactic related
8 to law enforcement, including the proper use of
9 force, firearms qualifications and training, proce-
10 dures for responding to an active threat, and any
11 other training, including crisis intervention training,
12 required for Department police officers.

13 (9) The availability and adequacy of equipment
14 furnished to Department police officers for use in
15 the provision of services under section 902 of title
16 38, United States Code, including batons, firearms,
17 pepper spray, ballistic vests, body-worn cameras, and
18 radios.

19 (10) The typical relationship between Depart-
20 ment police officers at a covered facility of the De-
21 partment and local law enforcement agencies.

22 (11) Any best practices observed that should be
23 made the standard throughout the Department.

24 (12) Any controls used by the Department and
25 covered facilities of the Department to ensure that

1 stationary, computer-based, and portable panic
2 alarm systems operate effectively, notify relevant
3 clinical, police, and security staff when activated, are
4 located in high-risk areas, as determined with input
5 from clinical staff, and are regularly tested.

6 (13) What security and incident preparedness
7 features are included as part of facility condition as-
8 sessments conducted by the Department for covered
9 facilities of the Department, including panic alarm
10 systems.

11 (14) What security and incident preparedness
12 features are part of—

13 (A) the capital program requirements man-
14 agement process of the Department; and

15 (B) the strategic capital investment plan-
16 ning business case development and review
17 processes of the Department.

18 (15) Any related areas of interest determined
19 by the Comptroller General to be relevant for inclu-
20 sion in the report.

21 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) COVERED FACILITY.—The term “covered
23 facility” means any facility of the Department where
24 Department police officers have jurisdiction.

1 (2) DEPARTMENT POLICE OFFICER.—The term
2 “Department police officer” means an employee of
3 the Department described in section 902(a) of title
4 38, United States Code.