

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
TO H.R. 4601  
OFFERED BY MR. LEVIN OF CALIFORNIA**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Commitment to Vet-  
3 eran Support and Outreach Act”.

**4 SEC. 2. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AF-  
5 FAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES AND IN-  
6 DIAN TRIBES TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO  
7 VETERANS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United  
9 States Code, is amended—

10 (1) by redesignating sections 6307 and 6308  
11 and sections 6308 and 6309, respectively; and

12 (2) by inserting after section 6306 the following  
13 new section 6307:

14 **“§ 6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to im-  
15 prove outreach to veterans**

16 **“(a) PURPOSE.—**It is the purpose of this section to  
17 provide for assistance by the Secretary to States and In-  
18 dian Tribes to carry out programs that—

1           “(1) improve outreach and assistance to vet-  
2           erans and the spouses, children, and parents of vet-  
3           erans, to ensure that such individuals are fully in-  
4           formed about any veterans and veterans-related ben-  
5           efits and programs (including veterans programs of  
6           a State or Indian Tribe) for which they may be eligi-  
7           ble; and

8           “(2) facilitate opportunities for such individuals  
9           to receive competent, qualified services in the prepa-  
10          ration, presentation, and prosecution of veterans  
11          benefits claims.

12          “(b) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary may award grants  
13          under this section to States and Indian Tribes—

14               “(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or other-  
15               wise enhance outreach activities;

16               “(2) to increase the number of county or Tribal  
17               veterans service officers serving in the State or In-  
18               dian Tribe by hiring new, additional such officers; or

19               “(3) to expand, carry out, coordinate, improve,  
20               or otherwise enhance existing programs, activities,  
21               and services of the existing organization of the State  
22               or Indian Tribe that has been recognized by the De-  
23               partment of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section  
24               5902, in the preparation, presentation, and prosecu-  
25               tion of claims for veterans benefits through rep-

1       representatives who hold positions as county or Tribal  
2       veterans service officers.

3       “(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant  
4       under this section, a State or Indian Tribe shall submit  
5       to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in  
6       such manner, and containing such information as the Sec-  
7       retary may require.

8       “(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1)  
9       shall include the following:

10           “(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

11           “(B) A description of the programs through  
12       which the State or Indian Tribe will meet the out-  
13       come measures developed by the Secretary under  
14       subsection (i).

15           “(C) A description of how the State or Indian  
16       Tribe will distribute grant amounts equitably among  
17       counties (or Tribal lands, as the case may be) with  
18       varying levels of urbanization.

19           “(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to  
20       meet the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska  
21       Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans,  
22       and veterans from other underserved communities.

23       “(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to en-  
24       sure that grants awarded under this section are equitably

1 distributed among States and Indian Tribes with varying  
2 levels of urbanization.

3 “(e) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize  
4 awarding grants under this section that will serve the fol-  
5 lowing areas:

6 “(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or  
7 Tribal veterans service officers.

8 “(2) Areas with high rates of—

9 “(A) suicide among veterans; or

10 “(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

11 “(f) USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERV-  
12 ICE OFFICERS.—A State or Indian Tribe that receives a  
13 grant under this section to carry out an activity described  
14 in subsection (b)(1) may only carry out the activity  
15 through—

16 “(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer  
17 of the State or Indian Tribe; or

18 “(2) if the State or Indian Tribe does not have  
19 a county or Tribal veterans service officer, or if the  
20 county or Tribal veterans service officers of the  
21 State or Indian Tribe cover only a portion of that  
22 State or Indian Tribe, an appropriate entity of a  
23 State, local, or Tribal government, as determined by  
24 the Secretary.

1           “(g) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant awarded  
2 under this section shall be used—

3           “(1) to expand existing programs, activities,  
4 and services;

5           “(2) to hire and maintain new, additional coun-  
6 ty or Tribal veterans service officers; or

7           “(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate  
8 carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

9           “(h) OTHER PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—A grant  
10 under this section may be used to provide education and  
11 training, including on-the-job training, for State, county,  
12 local, and Tribal government employees who provide (or  
13 when trained will provide) veterans outreach services in  
14 order for those employees to obtain and maintain accredi-  
15 tation in accordance with procedures approved by the Sec-  
16 retary.

17           “(i) OUTCOME MEASURES.—(1) The Secretary shall  
18 develop and provide to each State or Indian Tribe that  
19 receives a grant under this section written guidance on  
20 the following:

21           “(A) Outcome measures.

22           “(B) Policies of the Department.

23           “(2) In developing outcome measures under para-  
24 graph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

1           “(A) Increasing the use of veterans and vet-  
2           erans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable  
3           populations.

4           “(B) Increasing the number of county and  
5           Tribal veterans service officers recognized by the  
6           Secretary for the representation of veterans under  
7           chapter 59 of this title.

8           “(j) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) With respect  
9           to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary  
10          shall track the use of veterans benefits among the popu-  
11          lation served by the grant, including the average period  
12          of time between the date on which a veteran or other eligi-  
13          ble claimant applies for such a benefit and the date on  
14          which the veteran or other eligible claimant receives the  
15          benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

16          “(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life  
17          of the grant program established under this section, the  
18          Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

19                 “(A) the information tracked under paragraph  
20                 (1);

21                 “(B) how the grants awarded under this section  
22                 serve the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska  
23                 Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans,  
24                 and veterans from other underserved communities;  
25                 and

1           “(C) other information provided by States and  
2           Indian Tribes pursuant to the grant reporting re-  
3           quirements.

4           “(k) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—(1) The Secretary  
5 shall—

6           “(A) review the performance of each State or  
7           Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this sec-  
8           tion; and

9           “(B) make information regarding such perform-  
10          ance publicly available.

11          “(l) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a State  
12 or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section  
13 and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the  
14 Secretary under subsection (i), the Secretary shall require  
15 the State or Indian Tribe to submit a remediation plan  
16 under which the State or Indian Tribe shall describe how  
17 and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

18          “(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent  
19 grant under this section to a State or Indian Tribe de-  
20 scribed in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the  
21 remediation plan submitted by the State of Indian Tribe.

22          “(m) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant  
23 awarded under this section may not exceed 10 percent of  
24 amounts made available for grants under this section for  
25 the fiscal year in which the grant is awarded.

1       “(n) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Any grant  
2 awarded under this section shall be used to supplement  
3 and not supplant State and local funding that is otherwise  
4 available.

5       “(o) AWARD SUBJECT TO PROVISIONS OF APPRO-  
6 PRIATIONS.—The Secretary may award a grant under this  
7 section subject to the availability of appropriations for  
8 such purpose (other than amounts appropriated to the  
9 Cost of War Toxic Exposures Fund established under sec-  
10 tion 324(a) of this title).

11       “(p) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12               “(1) The term ‘county or Tribal veterans serv-  
13 ice officer’ includes a local equivalent veterans serv-  
14 ice officer.

15               “(2) The term ‘Indian Tribe’ has the meaning  
16 given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-De-  
17 termination and Education Assistance Act (25  
18 U.S.C. 5304).

19               “(3) The term ‘State’ includes the District of  
20 Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the  
21 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,  
22 and any territory or possession of the United States.

23               “(4) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the  
24 toll-free hotline for veterans established under sec-  
25 tion 1720F(h) of this title.”.



1           (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
2 at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended  
3 by striking the items relating to sections 6307 and 6308  
4 and inserting the following new items:

“6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans.

“6308. Outreach for eligible dependents.

“6309. Biennial report to Congress.”.

5           (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
6 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans  
7 Affairs for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028,  
8 \$50,000,000 to carry out section 6307 of title 38, United  
9 States Code, as added by subsection (a).

10          (d) AUTHORIZATION OF ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME  
11 EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEE.—During fiscal years 2024  
12 through 2028, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may hire  
13 two or more additional full-time equivalent employees in  
14 the Office of the General Counsel of the Department of  
15 Veterans Affairs, as compared to the number of full-time  
16 equivalent employees that would otherwise be authorized  
17 for such office, to carry out duties under the accreditation,  
18 discipline, and fees program.

