

111<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 5953

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## AN ACT

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to display in each facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs a Women Veterans Bill of Rights and to display in each prosthetics and orthotics clinic of the Department an Injured and Amputee Veterans Bill of Rights, 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. DISPLAY OF WOMEN VETERANS BILL OF**  
4 **RIGHTS.**

5       (a) DISPLAY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
6 shall ensure that the Women Veterans Bill of Rights de-  
7 scribed in subsection (b) is printed on signs in accessible  
8 formats and displayed prominently and conspicuously in  
9 each facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs and  
10 distributed widely to women veterans.

11       (b) WOMEN VETERANS BILL OF RIGHTS.—The  
12 Women Veterans Bill of Rights described in this sub-  
13 section is a sign stating that women veterans should have  
14 the following rights:

15           (1) The right to a coordinated, comprehensive,  
16 primary women’s health care, at every Department  
17 of Veterans Affairs medical facility, including the  
18 recognized models of best practices, systems, and  
19 structures for care delivery that ensure that every  
20 woman veteran has access to a Department of Vet-  
21 erans Affairs primary care provider who can meet all  
22 her primary care needs, including gender-specific,  
23 acute and chronic illness, preventive, and mental  
24 health care.

1           (2) The right to be treated with dignity and re-  
2           spect at all Department of Veterans Affairs facili-  
3           ties.

4           (3) The right to innovation in care delivery pro-  
5           moted and incentivized by the Veterans Health Ad-  
6           ministration to support local best practices fitted to  
7           the particular configuration and women veteran pop-  
8           ulation.

9           (4) The right to request and get treatment by  
10          clinicians with specific training and experience in  
11          women’s health issues.

12          (5) The right to enhanced capabilities of med-  
13          ical providers, clinical support, non-clinical, and ad-  
14          ministrative, to meet the comprehensive health care  
15          needs of women veterans.

16          (6) The right to request and expect gender eq-  
17          uity in provision of clinical health care services.

18          (7) The right to equal access to health care  
19          services as that of their male counterparts.

20          (8) The right to parity to their male veteran  
21          counterpart regarding the outcome of performance  
22          measures of health care services.

23          (9) The right to be informed, through outreach  
24          campaigns, of benefits under laws administered by  
25          the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to be included

1 in Department outreach materials for any benefits  
2 and service to which they are entitled.

3 (10) The right to be featured proportionately,  
4 including by age and ethnicity, in Department out-  
5 reach materials, including electronic and print media  
6 that clearly depict them as being the recipient of the  
7 benefits and services provided by the Department.

8 (11) The right to be recognized as an important  
9 separate population in new strategic plans for serv-  
10 ice delivery within the health care system of the De-  
11 partment of Veterans Affairs.

12 (12) The right to equal consideration in hiring  
13 and employment for any job to which they apply.

14 (13) The right to equal consideration in secur-  
15 ing Federal contracts.

16 (14) The right to equal access and accommoda-  
17 tions in homeless programs that will meet their  
18 unique family needs.

19 (15) The right to have their claims adjudicated  
20 equally, fairly, and accurately without bias or dis-  
21 parate treatment.

22 (16) The right to have their military sexual  
23 trauma and other injuries compensated in a way  
24 that reflects the level of trauma sustained.

1           (17) The right to expect that all veteran service  
2 officers, especially those who are trained by the De-  
3 partment of Veterans Affairs Training Responsibility  
4 Involvement Preparation program for claims proc-  
5 essing, are required to receive training to be aware  
6 of and sensitive to the signs of military sexual trau-  
7 ma, domestic violence, and personal assault.

8           (18) The right to the availability of female per-  
9 sonnel to assist them in the disability claims applica-  
10 tion and appellate processes of the Department.

11           (19) The right to the availability of female com-  
12 pensation and pension examiners.

13           (20) The right to expect specialized training be  
14 provided to disability rating personnel regarding  
15 military sexual trauma and gender-specific illnesses  
16 so that these claims can be adjudicated more accu-  
17 rately.

18           (21) The right to expect the collection of gen-  
19 der-specific data on disability ratings, for the per-  
20 formance of longitudinal and trend analyses, and for  
21 other applicable purposes.

22           (22) The right to a method to identify and  
23 track outcomes for all claims involving personal as-  
24 sault trauma, regardless of the resulting disability.

1           (23) The right for women veterans' programs  
2           and women veteran coordinators to be measured and  
3           evaluated for performance, consistency, and account-  
4           ability.

5           (24) The right to burial benefits under the laws  
6           administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

7 **SEC. 2. DISPLAY OF INJURED AND AMPUTEE VETERANS**  
8           **BILL OF RIGHTS.**

9           (a) DISPLAY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
10          shall ensure that the Injured and Amputee Veterans Bill  
11          of Rights described in subsection (b) is printed on signs  
12          in accessible formats and displayed prominently and con-  
13          spicuously in each prosthetics and orthotics clinic of the  
14          Department of Veterans Affairs.

15          (b) INJURED AND AMPUTEE VETERANS BILL OF  
16          RIGHTS.—The Injured and Amputee Veterans Bill of  
17          Rights described in this subsection is a statement that in-  
18          jured and amputee veterans should have the following  
19          rights:

20                (1) The right to access the highest quality pros-  
21                thetic and orthotic care, including the right to the  
22                most appropriate technology and best qualified prac-  
23                titioners.

24                (2) The right to continuity of care in the transi-  
25                tion from the Department of Defense health pro-

1       gram to the Department of Veterans Affairs health  
2       care system, including comparable benefits relating  
3       to prosthetic and orthotic services.

4           (3) The right to select the practitioner that best  
5       meets their orthotic and prosthetic needs, whether or  
6       not that practitioner is an employee of the Depart-  
7       ment of Veterans Affairs, a private practitioner who  
8       has entered into a contract with the Secretary of  
9       Veterans Affairs to provide prosthetic and orthotic  
10      services, or a private practitioner with specialized ex-  
11     pertise.

12          (4) The right to consistent and portable health  
13      care, including the right to obtain comparable serv-  
14      ices and technology at any medical facility of the  
15      Department of Veterans Affairs across the country.

16          (5) The right to timely and efficient prosthetic  
17      and orthotic care, including a speedy authorization  
18      process with expedited authorization available for  
19      veterans visiting from another area of the country.

20          (6) The right to play a meaningful role in reha-  
21      bilitation decisions, including the right to receive a  
22      second opinion regarding prosthetic and orthotic  
23      treatment options.

1           (7) The right to receive appropriate treatment,  
2 including the right to receive both a primary pros-  
3 thesis or orthosis and a functional spare.

4           (8) The right to be treated with respect and  
5 dignity and have an optimal quality of life both dur-  
6 ing and after rehabilitation.

7           (9) The right to transition and readjust to civil-  
8 ian life in an honorable manner, including by having  
9 ample access to vocational rehabilitation, employ-  
10 ment programs, and housing assistance.

11       (c) MONITORING AND RESOLUTION OF COM-  
12 PLAINS.—

13           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans  
14 Affairs, acting through the veteran liaison at each  
15 medical center of the Department of Veterans Af-  
16 fairs, shall collect information relating to the alleged  
17 mistreatment of injured and amputee veterans.

18           (2) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—For each fiscal  
19 quarter, the veteran liaison at each medical center of  
20 the Department shall submit to the Chief Consultant  
21 of Prosthetics and Sensory Aids of the Department  
22 a report on any information collected under para-  
23 graph (1) during that quarter.

24           (3) INVESTIGATION AND ADDRESSING OF COM-  
25 PLAINS.—The Chief Consultant, in cooperation



1 with appropriate employees of a medical center of  
2 the Department, shall investigate and address any  
3 information collected under paragraph (1) at that  
4 medical center.

5 **SEC. 3. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.**

6 (a) EDUCATION OF DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES.—The  
7 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that—

8 (1) all employees of the Department of Vet-  
9 erans Affairs receive training on the Women Vet-  
10 erans Bill of Rights described in section 1; and

11 (2) employees of the Department who work at  
12 prosthetics and orthotics clinics and who work as pa-  
13 tient advocates with veterans who receive care at  
14 such clinics, including Federal recovery coordinators  
15 and case managers, receive training on the Injured  
16 and Amputee Veterans Bill of Rights described in  
17 section 2.

18 (b) OUTREACH TO VETERANS.—The Secretary of  
19 Veterans Affairs shall conduct outreach to inform veterans  
20 about the Women Veterans Bill of Rights described in sec-  
21 tion 1 and the Injured and Amputee Veterans Bill of  
22 Rights described in section 2 by—

23 (1) ensuring that such Bills of Rights are avail-  
24 able on the Internet website of the Department of  
25 Veterans Affairs; and

1           (2) conducting other types of outreach targeted  
2           at specific groups of veterans, which may include  
3           outreach conducted on other Internet websites or  
4           through veterans service organizations.

5 **SEC. 4. EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN SERVICES.**

6           Nothing in this Act shall be construed to establish  
7 a right to any service excluded under 38 CFR 17.38, as  
8 in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

          Passed the House of Representatives November 30,  
2010.

Attest:

*Clerk.*



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