

Union Calendar No. 19

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 811

[Report No. 107-28]

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out construction projects for the purpose of improving, renovating, and updating patient care facilities at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. EVANS, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. FILNER, Mr. STUMP, Mr. REYES, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. BAKER, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, and Mr. BUYER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

MARCH 26, 2001

Additional sponsors: Mr. SPENCE, Mrs. ROUKEMA, Mr. FOLEY, Ms. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. BERKLEY, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. SHOWS, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. OWENS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York

MARCH 26, 2001

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on March 1, 2001]

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out construction projects for the purpose of improving, ren-

ovating, and updating patient care facilities at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

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 Hospital Emer-*
5 *gency Repair Act”.*

6 **SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY**
7 **PROJECTS FOR PATIENT CARE IMPROVE-**
8 **MENTS.**

9 *(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Af-*
10 *fairs is authorized to carry out major medical facility*
11 *projects in accordance with this section, using funds appro-*
12 *priated for fiscal year 2002 or fiscal year 2003 pursuant*
13 *to section 3. The cost of any such project may not exceed*
14 *\$25,000,000, except that up to two projects per year may*
15 *be carried out at a cost not to exceed \$30,000,000 for the*
16 *purpose stated in subsection (c)(1).*

17 *(2) Projects carried out under this section are not sub-*
18 *ject to section 8104(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code.*

19 *(b) TYPE OF PROJECTS.—A project carried out under*
20 *subsection (a) may be carried out only at a Department*
21 *of Veterans Affairs medical center and only for the purpose*
22 *of—*

23 *(1) improving a patient care facility;*

24 *(2) replacing a patient care facility;*

1 (3) *renovating a patient care facility;*

2 (4) *updating a patient care facility to contem-*
3 *porary standards; or*

4 (5) *improving, replacing, or renovating a re-*
5 *search facility or updating such a facility to contem-*
6 *porary standards.*

7 (c) *PURPOSE OF PROJECTS.—In selecting medical cen-*
8 *ters for projects under subsection (a), the Secretary shall*
9 *select projects to improve, replace, renovate, or update fa-*
10 *cilities to achieve one or more of the following:*

11 (1) *Seismic protection improvements related to*
12 *patient safety (or, in the case of a research facility,*
13 *patient or employee safety).*

14 (2) *Fire safety improvements.*

15 (3) *Improvements to utility systems and ancil-*
16 *lary patient care facilities (including such systems*
17 *and facilities that may be exclusively associated with*
18 *research facilities).*

19 (4) *Improved accommodation for persons with*
20 *disabilities, including barrier-free access.*

21 (5) *Improvements at patient care facilities to*
22 *specialized programs of the Department, including the*
23 *following:*

24 (A) *Blind rehabilitation centers.*

1 (B) *Inpatient and residential programs for*
2 *seriously mentally ill veterans, including mental*
3 *illness research, education, and clinical centers.*

4 (C) *Residential and rehabilitation programs*
5 *for veterans with substance-use disorders.*

6 (D) *Physical medicine and rehabilitation*
7 *activities.*

8 (E) *Long-term care, including geriatric re-*
9 *search, education, and clinical centers, adult day*
10 *care centers, and nursing home care facilities.*

11 (F) *Amputation care, including facilities*
12 *for prosthetics, orthotics programs, and sensory*
13 *aids.*

14 (G) *Spinal cord injury centers.*

15 (H) *Traumatic brain injury programs.*

16 (I) *Women veterans' health programs (in-*
17 *cluding particularly programs involving privacy*
18 *and accommodation for female patients).*

19 (J) *Facilities for hospice and palliative care*
20 *programs.*

21 (d) *REVIEW PROCESS.—(1) Before a project is sub-*
22 *mitted to the Secretary with a recommendation that it be*
23 *approved as a project to be carried out under the authority*
24 *of this section, the project shall be reviewed by a board with-*
25 *in the Department of Veterans Affairs that is independent*

1 of the Veterans Health Administration and that is con-
2 stituted by the Secretary to evaluate capital investment
3 projects. The board shall review each such project to deter-
4 mine the project's relevance to the medical care mission of
5 the Department and whether the project improves, ren-
6 ovates, repairs, or updates facilities of the Department in
7 accordance with this section.

8 (2) In selecting projects to be carried out under the
9 authority provided by this section, the Secretary shall con-
10 sider the recommendations of the board under paragraph
11 (1). In any case in which the Secretary selects a project
12 to be carried out under this section that was not rec-
13 ommended for such approval by the board under paragraph
14 (1), the Secretary shall include in the report of the Sec-
15 retary under section 4(b) notice of such selection and the
16 Secretary's reasons for not following the recommendation
17 of the board with respect to that project.

18 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

19 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—There are authorized to be appro-
20 priated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the Con-
21 struction, Major Projects, account for projects under section
22 2—

23 (1) \$250,000,000 for fiscal year 2002; and

24 (2) \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2003.

1 (b) *LIMITATION.*—*Projects may be carried out under*
2 *section 2 only using funds appropriated pursuant to the*
3 *authorization of appropriations in subsection (a), except*
4 *that funds appropriated for advance planning may be used*
5 *for the purposes for which appropriated in connection with*
6 *such projects.*

7 **SEC. 4. REPORTS.**

8 (a) *GAO REPORT.*—*Not later than April 1, 2003, the*
9 *Comptroller General shall submit to the Committees on Vet-*
10 *erans' Affairs and on Appropriations of the Senate and*
11 *House of Representatives a report evaluating the advan-*
12 *tages and disadvantages of congressional authorization for*
13 *projects of the type described in section 2(b) through general*
14 *authorization as provided by section 2(a), rather than*
15 *through specific authorization as would otherwise be appli-*
16 *cable under section 8104(a)(2) of title 38, United States*
17 *Code. Such report shall include a description of the actions*
18 *of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs during fiscal year 2002*
19 *to select and carry out projects under section 2.*

20 (b) *SECRETARY REPORT.*—*Not later than 120 days*
21 *after the date on which the site for the final project under*
22 *section 2 is selected, the Secretary shall submit to the com-*
23 *mittees referred to in subsection (a) a report on the author-*
24 *ization process under section 2. The Secretary shall include*
25 *in the report the following:*

1 (1) *A listing by project of each such project se-*
2 *lected by the Secretary under that section, together*
3 *with a prospectus description of the purposes of the*
4 *project, the estimated cost of the project, and a state-*
5 *ment attesting to the review of the project under sec-*
6 *tion 2(c), and, if that project was not recommended*
7 *by the board, the Secretary's justification under sec-*
8 *tion 2(d) for not following the recommendation of the*
9 *board.*

10 (2) *An assessment of the utility to the Depart-*
11 *ment of Veterans Affairs of that authorization process.*

12 (3) *Such recommendations as the Secretary con-*
13 *siders appropriate for future congressional policy for*
14 *authorizations of major and minor medical facility*
15 *construction projects for the Department of Veterans*
16 *Affairs.*

17 (4) *Any other matter that the Secretary con-*
18 *siders to be appropriate with respect to oversight by*
19 *Congress of capital facilities projects of the Depart-*
20 *ment of Veterans Affairs.*

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