

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to nonprofit organizations to assist such organizations in carrying out programs to provide service dogs to eligible veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. HEINRICH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to nonprofit organizations to assist such organizations in carrying out programs to provide service dogs to eligible veterans, 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 “Service Dogs Assisting
5 Veterans Act” or the “SAVES Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAM TO**
2 **AWARD GRANTS FOR THE PROVISION OF**
3 **SERVICE DOGS TO VETERANS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
5 shall require the Under Secretary for Health of the De-
6 partment of Veterans Affairs to establish a program under
7 which the Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive
8 basis, to nonprofit organizations to assist such organiza-
9 tions in carrying out programs to provide service dogs to
10 eligible veterans.

11 (b) APPLICATIONS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a
13 grant under this section, a nonprofit organization
14 shall submit an application to the Secretary at such
15 time, in such manner, and containing such informa-
16 tion as the Secretary may require.

17 (2) ELEMENTS.—An application submitted
18 under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

19 (A) A proposal for the evaluation required
20 by subsection (d).

21 (B) A description of the following:

22 (i) The training that will be provided
23 by the organization to eligible veterans.

24 (ii) The training of dogs that will
25 serve as service dogs.

1 (iii) The aftercare services that the or-
2 ganization will provide for such dogs and
3 eligible veterans.

4 (iv) The plan for publicizing the avail-
5 ability of such dogs through a marketing
6 campaign that targets eligible veterans.

7 (v) The commitment of the organiza-
8 tion to have humane standards for ani-
9 mals.

10 (C) A statement certifying that the organi-
11 zation is accredited by Assistance Dogs Inter-
12 national or another similar widely recognized
13 accreditation organization that the Secretary
14 determines has accreditation standards that
15 meet or exceed the standards of Assistance
16 Dogs International.

17 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The recipient of a grant
19 under this section shall use the grant amounts to
20 plan, design, establish, or operate (or any combina-
21 tion thereof) one or more programs that provide
22 service dogs to eligible veterans.

23 (2) EQUAL ACCESS.—The Secretary shall re-
24 quire each recipient of a grant under this section to

1 provide equal access to service dogs to eligible vet-
2 erans who are women.

3 (d) EVALUATIONS.—The Secretary shall require each
4 recipient of a grant under this section to conduct an eval-
5 uation of the effectiveness of the activities carried out
6 through the grant by such recipient.

7 (e) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The total amount of grants
8 awarded to each nonprofit organization under this section
9 may not exceed \$2,000,000.

10 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) ELIGIBLE VETERAN.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “eligible vet-
13 eran” means a veteran who—

14 (i) is enrolled in the system of annual
15 patient enrollment of the Department of
16 Veterans Affairs established and operated
17 under section 1705(a) of title 38, United
18 States Code; and

19 (ii) has one or more disabilities de-
20 scribed in subparagraph (B).

21 (B) DISABILITY DESCRIBED.—A disability
22 described in this subparagraph is any of the fol-
23 lowing:

24 (i) Blindness or visual impairment.

- 1 (ii) Loss of use of a limb, paralysis, or
2 other significant mobility issue.
3 (iii) Loss of hearing.
4 (iv) Traumatic brain injury.
5 (v) Post-traumatic stress disorder.
6 (vi) Military sexual trauma.
7 (vii) Any other disability that the Sec-
8 retary considers appropriate.

9 (2) SERVICE DOG.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “service dog”
11 means any dog that is individually trained to do
12 work or perform tasks that are—

- 13 (i) for the benefit of an individual
14 with a disability, including a physical or
15 sensory disability or a psychiatric, intellec-
16 tual, or other mental disability; and
17 (ii) directly related to the disability of
18 the individual.

19 (B) WORK AND TASKS.—The crime-deter-
20 rent effects of the presence of a dog and the
21 provision by a dog of emotional support, well-
22 being, comfort, or companionship do not con-
23 stitute work or tasks for the purposes of sub-
24 paragraph (A).

1 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act
3 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.