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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To authorize the Attorney General to make grants for the creation and operation of veterans response teams within law enforcement agencies, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. SALAZAR introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To authorize the Attorney General to make grants for the creation and operation of veterans response teams within law enforcement agencies, 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 “Supporting Every at-
5 Risk Veteran in Critical Emergencies Act of 2021” or the
6 “SERVICE Act of 2021”

1 **SEC. 2. VETERAN RESPONSE TEAM PILOT PROGRAM.**

2 (a) GRANT AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General,
3 acting through the Director of the Office of Community
4 Oriented Policing Services, is authorized to operate a pilot
5 program to make grants to States, units of local govern-
6 ment, and Indian Tribal governments, to support the cre-
7 ation and operation of veterans response teams in the law
8 enforcement agencies of the jurisdiction, in accordance
9 with subsection (b).

10 (b) GRANTS TO DEVELOP VETERANS RESPONSE
11 TEAMS.—

12 (1) ACTIVITIES OF A VETERANS RESPONSE
13 TEAM.—A veterans response team may include a
14 program that does the following:

15 (A) Provides law enforcement officers who
16 are veterans with a pin that identifies the de-
17 partment of the Armed Forces in which the of-
18 ficer served, which the officer may wear while
19 on duty.

20 (B) Uses the Veterans Re-Entry Search
21 Service of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

22 (C) Establishes a system of communication
23 and information sharing with the Department
24 of Veterans Affairs and other community re-
25 source agencies.

1 (D) Establishes a working relationship
2 with the Veterans Justice Outreach specialist.

3 (E) Establishes a working relationship
4 with the local justice system and veterans court,
5 if applicable, including identifying veterans
6 upon entry into the court system and local de-
7 tention facility, with notification to the local
8 Department of Veterans Affairs office for con-
9 firmation and appropriate services.

10 (F) Provides training and education for
11 law enforcement officers on mental health
12 issues related to military service, such as post-
13 traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain in-
14 jury, depression, and anxiety.

15 (G) Meets regularly to discuss issues vet-
16 erans are facing in the community, as well as
17 suitable responses.

18 (H) Organizes coordinated and trained
19 teams of first responders to respond 24 hours
20 per day, and 7 days per week, on a volunteer
21 basis, to calls for assistance involving a veteran
22 in crisis.

23 (I) Develops a plan to—

24 (i) measure the success of veteran re-
25 sponse teams; and

1 (ii) track nationwide best practices on
2 how veterans response teams provide law
3 enforcement officers with essential infor-
4 mation during and following veteran-in-
5 volved incidents to which veterans response
6 teams respond.

7 (J) Offers veterans who have come into
8 contact with the veterans response team the op-
9 portunity to maintain ongoing contact with the
10 veterans response team.

11 (2) CREATION, HIRING, AND TRAINING OF VET-
12 ERANS RESPONSE TEAM.—The creation of a vet-
13 erans response team within a law enforcement agen-
14 cy pursuant to a grant under this section may in-
15 clude doing the following:

16 (A) Identifying a law enforcement officer
17 in the law enforcement agency who is pas-
18 sionate about and committed to forming a vet-
19 erans response team, and will serve as the lead-
20 er of such team.

21 (B) Identifying other law enforcement offi-
22 cers in the law enforcement agency who are in-
23 terested and willing to participate on the vet-
24 erans response team.

1 (C) Identifying and inviting interested
2 community members to join the veterans re-
3 sponse team, which may include members of
4 veteran resource organizations, the local office
5 of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the re-
6 gional veterans justice outreach program, other
7 law enforcement agencies, fire and emergency
8 medical services departments, hospitals, social
9 work agencies, other entities within the justice
10 system, nonprofit organizations, and other ap-
11 propriate entities.

12 (D) Immersing veterans response team
13 members in the veteran community by attend-
14 ing veterans events, responding to incidents in-
15 volving veterans, as described in paragraph
16 (1)(I), and making public appearances to fur-
17 ther engage with veterans.

18 (E) Providing training on veterans experi-
19 encing crisis for individuals involved with the
20 veterans response team, and for other law en-
21 forcement officers who are likely to come in
22 contact with veterans.

23 (c) FUNDING.—There is authorized to be appro-
24 priated \$5,000,000 to carry out this section for each of
25 fiscal years 2022 through 2026.

1 (d) TERMINATION.—The authority under this section
2 shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date
3 of the enactment of this section.

4 (e) REPORTING.—The Attorney General shall provide
5 a report to Congress on the progress of the pilot program
6 that includes the following:

7 (1) The number of applicants.

8 (2) The number of grants awarded.

9 (3) The average grant amount sought by an ap-
10 plicant.

11 (4) The average amount of a grant awarded.

12 (5) Any other information that the Attorney
13 General determines to be appropriate.