

SECTION BY SECTION SUMMARY

Homeless Veterans CREDIT Act

Homeless Veterans Credit Repair, Enhancement, and Debt Improvement for Tomorrow Act

Summary: This bill directs the Secretary of Veterans affairs to conduct a study on the use of, barriers to and evaluability of financial and credit counseling services for “housing unstable” veterans.

Section 1. Title

Title: “Homeless Veterans Credit Repair, Enhancement, and Debt Improvement for Tomorrow Act” or the “Homeless Veterans CREDIT Act”.

Section 2 (a). Study

This section would authorize the VA to study the “use and variation” of financial and credit counseling services for housing unstable veterans, the “barriers to accessing” financial and credit counseling services for housing unstable veterans, and the ability to conduct a wide-scale survey of the effects of financial and credit counseling services for housing unstable veterans.

Section 2 (b). Methodology

This section explains the methodology used for the studies in subsection (a). The Secretary shall survey housing unstable veterans utilizing the Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program, those who do not utilize the program, SSFV grantees, financial and credit counselors, and subject matter experts. The survey shall be administered to a representative sample of housing unstable veterans and veterans in areas with high veteran homelessness.

Section 2 (c). Use and Variation of Services

This section explains that the Secretary shall look at the types of credit counseling services that are offered for “housing unstable veterans” and other classes of veterans when conducting the study. It also authorizes the Secretary to use government and non-government data.

Section 2 (d). Barriers to Counseling

This section tasks the Secretary with studying perceived barriers to credit counseling. Specifically: cost of services, perceived stigma, transportation, availability of childcare, comprehension of eligibility requirements, effectiveness of outreach, location and operating hours, the COVID–19 pandemic and other health related issues, such other significant barriers as the secretary considers appropriate.

Section 2 (e). Evaluation and Assessment of Effects of Counseling

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This section states that the Secretary must evaluate and provide recommendations on the feasibility of studying the following effects of credit counseling: changes in employment, changes in housing status, changes, changes in income, changes in credit score, and other effects that the Secretary deems appropriate.

Section 2 (f). Discharge by Contract

The Secretary may seek to enter in a contract with an outside organization that can conduct the study.

Section 2 (g). Mandatory Review of Data by Certain Elements of Department

This section tasks the heads of major VA departments to review the results of the study and provide recommendations.

Section 2 (h). Reports

Within one year of passage, the Secretary shall submit an interim report to Congress on the study. A final report is to be submitted within 30 months of passage.

Section 2 (i). Definitions

The term “housing unstable veteran” means a veteran that is without a permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation. The term “Supportive Services for Veterans 24 Families program” means the program established pursuant to section 2044 of title 38, United States 2 Code.