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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To direct the Secretary of the Navy to take certain actions relating to improved mental health care, and for other purposes.

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**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To direct the Secretary of the Navy to take certain actions relating to improved mental health care, 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 “Sailor Standard of  
5       Care Act of 2023”.

6       **SEC. 2. ACTIONS BY SECRETARY OF THE NAVY RELATING**  
7               **TO IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH CARE.**

8       (a) REFORMS RELATING TO LIMITED DUTY.—

1           (1) ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.—The Secretary  
2           of the Navy shall provide additional resources to any  
3           unit with greater than 15 members of the Navy des-  
4           ignated for limited duty at a given time, including  
5           through the establishment of a new billet for a med-  
6           ical officer, chaplain, and civilian employee of the  
7           Department of Defense in a mental health position  
8           for such unit.

9           (2) MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING.—The Sec-  
10          retary of the Navy shall require that each member  
11          of the Navy designated for limited duty receives,  
12          upon such designation and once every 60 days there-  
13          after for the duration of such designation, a mental  
14          health screening by a mental health professional of  
15          the Department.

16          (3) FRAMEWORK.—The Secretary of the Navy  
17          shall establish a framework to ensure—

18                (A) centralized leadership for the manage-  
19                ment of members of the Navy designated for  
20                limited duty and centralized responsibility for  
21                the wellbeing of such members while so des-  
22                ignated; and

23                (B) a smooth transition for members of  
24                the Navy who have suicidal ideations or other  
25                mental health care needs during transfers be-

1           tween units or while designated for limited  
2           duty.

3           (4) REPORT.—Not later than December 31,  
4           2024, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the  
5           Committees on Armed Services of the House of Rep-  
6           resentatives and the Senate a report on—

7                   (A) whether timeliness standards applica-  
8                   ble to the timing of appointments between med-  
9                   ical providers and members of the Navy des-  
10                  ignated for limited duty are sufficient, as deter-  
11                  mined by the Secretary of the Navy, and the ex-  
12                  tent to which such standards are complied with;  
13                  and

14                  (B) the number of databases used to track  
15                  the status of such appointments and rec-  
16                  ommendations by the Secretary of the Navy re-  
17                  garding methods to simplify such tracking.

18           (5) BRIEFING.—Not later than January 31,  
19           2024, the Secretary of the Navy shall provide to the  
20           Committees on Armed Services of the House of Rep-  
21           resentatives and the Senate a briefing on—

22                   (A) the average number of days for the  
23                   medical separation of a member of the Navy  
24                   previously designated for limited duty; and

1 (B) recommendations for steps the Sec-  
2 retary of the Navy may take to streamline and  
3 expedite applicable processes to ensure such  
4 separation is timely.

5 (b) RESOURCES DASHBOARD.—Not later than De-  
6 cember 31, 2024, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for  
7 Manpower and Reserve Affairs shall establish and main-  
8 tain a dashboard to track quality of life programs of the  
9 Department of the Navy (including such programs relat-  
10 ing to childcare, healthcare, education, housing, and  
11 spouse employment) and the rate of usage of each such  
12 program.

13 (c) BEST PRACTICES IN DEALING WITH MULTIPLE  
14 SUICIDES.—

15 (1) STUDY.—The Secretary of the Navy shall  
16 conduct a study on recent cases in which multiple  
17 suicides occurred within 30 days of each other  
18 among members assigned to the same unit or com-  
19 mand of the Department of the Navy.

20 (2) ELEMENTS.—The study under paragraph  
21 (1) shall include an assessment of the following:

22 (A) Any underlying quality of life issues  
23 that may have been prevalent among the unit  
24 or command leading up to the initial suicide.

1 (B) The culture of the unit or command  
2 prior to such initial suicide.

3 (C) The actions taken immediately fol-  
4 lowing such initial suicide and preceding any  
5 subsequent suicides.

6 (D) Whether the individuals who completed  
7 suicide had previously expressed suicide ideation  
8 and whether such individuals engaged with  
9 mental health resources available prior to com-  
10 pleting suicide.

11 (E) The mental health resources that were  
12 available to such individuals prior to the initial  
13 suicide, after the initial suicide, and after any  
14 subsequent suicides.

15 (3) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after  
16 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
17 of the Navy shall submit to the Committees on  
18 Armed Services of the House of Representatives and  
19 the Senate a report containing the findings of the  
20 study under paragraph (1) and a standard operating  
21 procedure of the Department of the Navy for re-  
22 sponding to multiple suicides.

23 (d) REPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH CARE UNDER  
24 TRICARE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of  
25 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall

1 submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the House  
2 of Representatives and the Senate a report containing the  
3 following:

4 (1) An analysis of the average timeline to cre-  
5 dential potential mental health care providers under  
6 the TRICARE program as compared to the timeline  
7 under Medicare and other major insurance networks,  
8 including quantitative data regarding, with respect  
9 to individuals applying for credentialing as mental  
10 health care providers under the TRICARE program,  
11 the following:

12 (A) The denial of such applications.

13 (B) The method and frequency of notifica-  
14 tions regarding the application provided to such  
15 applicants.

16 (C) With respect to denied applications,  
17 the method of feedback provided to such appli-  
18 cants, and the resolution processes available to  
19 such applicants.

20 (2) The number of current and projected men-  
21 tal health care providers under the TRICARE pro-  
22 gram, as compared to the number of civilian mental  
23 health care providers outside of such program, and  
24 a description of any capacity shortfalls with respect  
25 to mental health care providers under the TRICARE

1 program, taking into account the mental health cri-  
2 sis within the Armed Forces.

3 (3) An analysis of the reimbursement rates for  
4 mental health care providers under the TRICARE  
5 program, disaggregated by TRICARE provider net-  
6 work region, as compared to the average reimburse-  
7 ment rates for such providers under private health  
8 insurance plans and Medicare.

9 (4) An assessment of—

10 (A) whether the Secretary of Defense, in  
11 carrying out the TRICARE program, has used  
12 the methods outlined in part 199.14 of title 32,  
13 Code of Federal Regulations, to increase reim-  
14 bursement rates in certain geographic locations;  
15 and

16 (B) what, if any, corrective measures have  
17 been taken since the publication by the Comp-  
18 troller General of the United States of the re-  
19 port titled “Defense Health Care: TRICARE  
20 Multiyear Surveys Indicate Problems with Ac-  
21 cess to Care for Nonenrolled Beneficiaries  
22 (GAO 13-364)” on April 2, 2013, and in par-  
23 ticular, corrective measures addressing the find-  
24 ing of such report dealing with civilian mental  
25 health care providers and reimbursement rates.

1           (5) The status of implementing the rec-  
2           ommendations contained in the report of the Inspec-  
3           tor General of the Department of Defense published  
4           August 10, 2020, titled “Evaluation of Access to  
5           Mental Health Care in the Department of Defense  
6           (DODIG-2020-112)” (or any successor report) and  
7           the estimated implementation date for any such rec-  
8           ommendations that have not been implemented as of  
9           the date of the submission of the report.

10          (6) An assessment of what, if any, additional  
11          authorities and resources may be needed by the De-  
12          partment of Defense to effectively address the issue  
13          of timely access to mental healthcare for members of  
14          the Armed Forces on active duty and the dependents  
15          thereof.