

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for peer support specialists for claimants who are survivors of military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for peer support specialists for claimants who are survivors of military sexual trauma, 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. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PROCESSING OF**
4 **CLAIMS BY VETERANS FOR COMPENSATION**
5 **FOR CERTAIN MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS**
6 **BASED ON MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1166 of title 38, United
8 States Code, is amended—

1 (1) by striking “or air service” both places it
2 appears and inserting “air, or space service”;

3 (2) in subsection (a)—

4 (A) in the heading, by striking “IN GEN-
5 ERAL” and inserting “PROCESSING”;

6 (B) by inserting “(1)” before “The Sec-
7 retary”; and

8 (C) by adding at the end the following new
9 paragraphs:

10 “(2) A peer support specialist of the Department—

11 “(A) shall not be responsible for providing any
12 assistance to a veteran regarding a claim described
13 in paragraph (1), other than counseling services,
14 guidance, and support, pursuant to duties deter-
15 mined by the Under Secretary for Health; and

16 “(B) shall not participate in the adjudication of
17 such a claim.”;

18 (3) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as
19 subsections (c) and (d), respectively;

20 (4) by inserting, after subsection (a), the fol-
21 lowing new subsection (b):

22 “(b) REFERRALS TO MST COORDINATORS.—The
23 Secretary shall include, in forms for claims described in
24 subsection (a), an option for a veteran to elect to be re-
25 ferred to a military sexual trauma coordinator of the Vet-

1 erans Health Administration at the facility of the Depart-
2 ment nearest to the residence of such veteran.”; and

3 (5) in subsection (c), as redesignated—

4 (A) by inserting “(1)” before “The Sec-
5 retary”; and

6 (B) by adding at the end the following new
7 paragraphs:

8 “(2) The Secretary shall ensure that peer support
9 specialists of the Department receive annual training on
10 how to provide peer support regarding military sexual
11 trauma.

12 “(3) The Secretary shall provide annual training, re-
13 garding the processing of claims described in subsection
14 (a), to the following individuals:

15 “(A) Military sexual trauma coordinators of the
16 Veterans Health Administration.

17 “(B) Peer support specialists of the Depart-
18 ment.”;

19 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

20 (1) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of such
21 section is amended by striking “**Specialized**
22 **teams to evaluate claims**” and inserting
23 “**Claims**”.

24 (2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections
25 at the beginning of chapter 11 of such title is

1 amended by striking the item relating to section
2 1166 and inserting the following:

“1166. Claims involving military sexual trauma.”.