

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4929

To improve lethal means safety training and education conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2024

Mr. KING introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To improve lethal means safety training and education conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 “Lethal Means Safe
5 Storage for Veteran Suicide Prevention Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. UPDATE ON POLICY OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
7 **ERANS AFFAIRS FOR LETHAL MEANS SAFETY.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the
9 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
10 erans Affairs shall update the policy of the Department

1 of Veterans Affairs relating to lethal means safety and sui-
2 cide prevention to require each health care provider of the
3 Veterans Health Administration that is required to receive
4 training on lethal means safety and suicide prevention to
5 receive such training not less frequently than annually.

6 (b) IMMEDIATE RECEIPT OF TRAINING.—The Sec-
7 retary shall ensure that each health care provider of the
8 Veterans Health Administration who has not received
9 training on lethal means safety and suicide prevention
10 during the one-year period preceding the date of the enact-
11 ment of this Act receives such training not later than 120
12 days after such date of enactment.

13 (c) COMMUNITY CARE PROVIDERS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure
15 that a health care provider, as a condition of serving
16 as a health care provider under the Veterans Com-
17 munity Care Program under section 1703 of title
18 38, United States Code, shall receive training on le-
19 thal means safety and suicide prevention not less
20 frequently than annually.

21 (2) IMMEDIATE RECEIPT OF TRAINING.—The
22 Secretary shall ensure that a health care provider
23 under the Veterans Community Care Program who
24 has not received training on lethal means safety and
25 suicide prevention during the one-year period pre-

1 ceding the date of the enactment of this Act receives
2 such training not later than 120 days after such
3 date of enactment.

4 (d) HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OF THE VETERANS
5 HEALTH ADMINISTRATION DEFINED.—In this section,
6 the term “health care provider of the Veterans Health Ad-
7 ministration” means a full-time, part-time, or intermittent
8 employee of the Veterans Health Administration—

9 (1) engaged in patient care as a physician, psy-
10 chologist, registered nurse, social worker, physician
11 assistant, pharmacist, or dentist; or

12 (2) serving in the capacity of case manager or
13 as a team leader or counselor at a Vet Center (as
14 defined in section 1712A(h) of title 38, United
15 States Code).

16 **SEC. 3. PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN OF DEPARTMENT**
17 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ON LETHAL MEANS**
18 **SAFETY.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
20 shall coordinate with veterans service organizations to
21 carry out public education campaigns for veterans related
22 to lethal means safety and safe storage options.

23 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—Public education
24 campaigns under subsection (a) shall focus on—

25 (1) suicide prevention;

1 (2) communicating why health care providers
2 may ask about access to lethal means (including
3 firearms and medications);

4 (3) communicating the importance of planning
5 ahead to put space and time between thoughts of
6 self-harm and access to lethal means; and

7 (4) communicating the importance of secure
8 storage of firearms.

9 (c) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION DEFINED.—

10 In this section, the term “veterans service organization”
11 means any organization recognized by the Secretary of
12 Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under
13 section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

14 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
15 **AFFAIRS ON LETHAL MEANS SAFETY.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
17 shall carry out a grant program to award grants to entities
18 specified in subsection (b) for the purpose of distributing
19 gun lock boxes or gun safes to veterans.

20 (b) ENTITIES SPECIFIED.—The entities specified in
21 this subsection are the following:

22 (1) States.

23 (2) Veterans service organizations.

24 (3) Nonprofit organizations.

25 (4) Indian tribes.

1 (c) AMOUNT OF GRANTS.—

2 (1) TOTAL AMOUNT.—The total amount of
3 grants awarded under this section may not exceed
4 \$2,000,000.

5 (2) INDIVIDUAL GRANTS.—An entity specified
6 in subsection (b) may receive a grant under this sec-
7 tion in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.

8 (d) USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS.—Grant amounts
9 awarded under this section shall be used to provide free
10 gun lock boxes or gun safes to veterans.

11 (e) COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.—An entity
12 awarded a grant under this section may not—

13 (1) collect names or personal information of any
14 veteran seeking a gun lock box or gun safe under
15 this section; or

16 (2) inquire about the gun ownership of any
17 such veteran.

18 (f) CONFIRMATION OF VETERAN STATUS.—If a vet-
19 eran presents to an entity awarded a grant under this sec-
20 tion the Department of Defense Form 214 for such vet-
21 eran or another approved method of confirming their vet-
22 eran status, that shall be sufficient proof of eligibility for
23 a gun lock box or gun safe under this section.

24 (g) LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF GRANTS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
2 graph (2), not more than one grant may be awarded
3 under this section in each Veterans Integrated Serv-
4 ice Network.

5 (2) ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—Additional grants
6 may be awarded under this section within a Vet-
7 erans Integrated Service Network if the Secretary
8 determines that additional amounts are available,
9 with priority given to Veterans Integrated Service
10 Networks with the highest rates of suicide by fire-
11 arm among veterans.

12 (h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
13 tion shall be construed to—

14 (1) authorize or require the collection of per-
15 sonal identifiable information of recipients of gun
16 lock boxes or gun safes for the purpose of tracking
17 firearms ownership;

18 (2) require veterans to register firearms with
19 the Department of Veterans Affairs;

20 (3) require mandatory firearm storage for vet-
21 erans participating in the grant program under this
22 section; or

23 (4) consider a veteran participating in the grant
24 program under this section a prohibited person
25 under section 922(g) of title 18, United States Code.

1 (i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) GUN LOCK BOX; GUN SAFE.—The terms
3 “gun lock box” and “gun safe” mean a lock box or
4 safe, as the case may be—

5 (A) intended to be used for the secure
6 storage of a firearm;

7 (B) designed and marketed to deny unau-
8 thorized access to, or render inoperable, a fire-
9 arm or ammunition, and secured by a combina-
10 tion, key, or biometric lock;

11 (C) that may be unlocked only by means of
12 a combination, key, or other similar means;

13 (D) that complies with the standards set
14 forth by the American Society for Testing and
15 Materials (ASTM International); and

16 (E) is manufactured in the United States.

17 (2) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The
18 term “veterans service organization” means any or-
19 ganization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans
20 Affairs for the representation of veterans under sec-
21 tion 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

22 (j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
24 appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

1 \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through
2 2030 to carry out this section.

3 (2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Amounts
4 appropriated pursuant to an authorization of appro-
5 priations under paragraph (1) shall supplement, not
6 supplant, existing suicide prevention funding of the
7 Department of Veterans Affairs.

○