

Section-by-Section

Section 1: Funding for Claims and Appeals Processing: This section provides \$272 million for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the benefits claims and appeals backlog. This funding will be used to increase staff overtime; expand Veterans Benefits Administration-funded scanning of service records from federal records facilities impacted by COVID-19; improve scheduling of hearings; and enhance contact center functions. In addition, funding supports the Board of Veterans Appeals efforts to improve mail processing and add temporary staff, including intake specialists, attorneys, and staff to support telehearings.

Section 2: Funding Availability for Medical Care and Health Needs: This section provides nearly \$13.5 billion for VA to provide health care services and related support to eligible veterans. It includes funding to cover the impacts of delays in care, more expensive care being needed as a result of putting off needed care, and greater reliance on VA due to economic impacts from the pandemic. It also includes funding for sustainment of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act-supported staffing and service level expansions, including suicide prevention, Women's Health, and enhancements for VA homelessness programs and telehealth expansion. This section broadly allows spending to provide medical services to veterans, including medical facility improvements, research, and administrative expenses. It allows spending of up to \$4 billion for the Veterans Community Care Program as part of the total.

Section 3: Funding for Supply Chain Modernization: This section provides \$100 million in funding for investments in information technology systems to support the acceleration of VA's supply chain modernization efforts.

Sec 4: Funding for State Homes: This section provides support to State Veterans Homes through two mechanisms. First, it provides \$500 million for VA to provide construction funds to states with the required match for projects that will upgrade and enhance safety and operation of homes across the country. It further provides \$250 million in one-time emergency payments to support these state-operated facilities, to be allocated based on the number of eligible veteran residents they are caring for. This emergency funding can be used to enhance treatment of veterans during the pandemic, including by enhancing cleaning services, procuring personal protective equipment or other equipment, and temporarily expanding staffing levels to care for veterans.

Sec 5: Funding for OIG: This section provides \$10 million for the VA Office of Inspector General to provide oversight.

Sec 6: Rapid Retraining Program: This section provides nearly \$400 million for up to 12 months of retraining assistance for veterans who are unemployed due to COVID-19 and do not have other veteran education benefits. This funding covers the cost of the retraining program, and provides a housing allowance for veterans while they are undergoing this training.

Sec 7: Waiver of Co-pays: This section allows VA to waive copays for treatment provided to eligible veterans, beginning April 6, 2020 when VA first paused medical billing, through

September 30, 2021. This section also authorizes VA to reimburse those veterans who already submitted payments for their care during this period.