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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize a joint scholarship program under which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pays for medical education of an officer of the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service at the Uniformed Services University in return for a period of obligated service by such officer at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

M_____. _____ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize a joint scholarship program under which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pays for medical education of an officer of the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service at the Uniformed Services University in return for a period of obligated service by such officer at a medical facility of 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Medical
3 Students and VA Workforce Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS-PUBLIC**
5 **HEALTH SERVICE JOINT SCHOLARSHIP PRO-**
6 **GRAM.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 76 of title 38, United
8 States Code, is amended by inserting, after subchapter V,
9 the following new subchapter:

10 “SUBCHAPTER V-A—VETERANS AFFAIRS-PUB-
11 LIC HEALTH SERVICE JOINT SCHOLARSHIP
12 PROGRAM

13 **“SEC. 7661. AUTHORITY.**

14 “As part of the Educational Assistance Program, the
15 Secretary of Veterans Affairs may, in partnership with the
16 Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Sec-
17 retary of Defense, carry out a scholarship program, to be
18 known as the Department of Veterans Affairs-Public
19 Health Service Joint Scholarship Program (hereafter in
20 this subchapter, ‘the program’) under which a PHS officer
21 shall—

22 “(1) attend the F. Edward Hébert School of
23 Medicine of USU at the expense of the Department
24 of Veterans Affairs; and

25 “(2) after graduating and completing an initial
26 residency, serve, full-time, at a medical facility of the

1 Department of Veterans Affairs to fulfill a period of
2 obligated service.

3 **“SEC. 7662. INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT.**

4 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
5 fairs, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and
6 the Secretary of Defense may enter into, and maintain,
7 an interagency agreement to carry out the program.

8 “(b) TERMS.—Such an agreement shall, in accord-
9 ance with this subchapter govern aspects of the program,
10 including the following:

11 “(1) The eligibility of a PHS officer to receive
12 a scholarship under the program.

13 “(2) The number of PHS officers who may re-
14 ceive a scholarship each year.

15 “(3) The authority of the Secretary of Health
16 and Human Services to deploy a PHS officer who
17 receives a scholarship under the program before
18 such PHS officer completes the term of obligated
19 service under this subchapter.

20 “(c) LIMITATION.—Nothing in such agreement may
21 transfer from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary
22 or the Secretary of Health and Human Services any au-
23 thority to determine who may attend USU.

1 **“SEC. 7663. COSTS.**

2 “(a) ESTIMATES.—Before the beginning of each aca-
3 demic year—

4 “(1) the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
5 ices shall provide the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
6 with an estimate of the costs that the Secretary of
7 Veterans Affairs shall be obliged to reimburse the
8 Secretary of Health and Human Services under sub-
9 section (b) for the next fiscal year; and

10 “(2) the Secretary of Defense shall provide the
11 Secretary of Veterans Affairs with an estimate of
12 the costs that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
13 be obligated to reimburse the Secretary of Defense
14 under subsection (b) for the next fiscal year.

15 “(b) PAYMENT; RECONCILIATION.—(1) Each fiscal
16 year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay the Sec-
17 retary of Health and Human Services the amount under
18 subsection (a)(1).

19 “(2) Each fiscal year, the Secretary of Veterans Af-
20 fairs shall pay the Secretary of Defense the amount under
21 subsection (a)(2).

22 “(3) If a payment made under this subsection does
23 not equal the actual relevant costs for the fiscal year, the
24 Secretary concerned shall refund the excess amount paid,
25 or supplement the shortfall, as applicable.

1 **“SEC. 7664. OBLIGATED SERVICE.**

2 “(a) DETAIL.—(1) Pursuant to section 214 of the
3 Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 215), the Secretary
4 of Health and Human Services shall detail a PHS officer
5 who receives a scholarship under the program to the De-
6 partment of Veterans Affairs.

7 “(2) The length of such detail shall be sufficient for
8 the officer to complete—

9 “(A) attendance at USU described in section
10 7661 of this title;

11 “(B) an initial residency; and

12 “(C) a period of obligated service, not to exceed
13 ten years, in a medical facility of the Department of
14 Veterans Affairs.

15 “(b) WRITTEN AGREEMENT.—A PHS officer, the
16 Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the Secretary of Health
17 and Human Services shall enter into a written agreement
18 specifying the terms of such detail and the length period
19 of obligated service of such PHS officer.

20 “(c) FAILURE TO COMPLETE PERIOD OF OBLIGATED
21 SERVICE.—(1) A PHS officer who receives a scholarship
22 under the program and fails to complete the period of obli-
23 gated service shall reimburse the Secretary of Veterans
24 Affairs an amount equal to—

25 “(A) twice the total amount of the tuition and
26 expenses paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

1 to the Secretary of Defense arising the attendance
2 of such PHS officer at USU; and

3 “(B) twice the salary, allowances, and benefits
4 paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Sec-
5 retary of Health and Human Services arising from
6 the detail under subsection (a).

7 “(2) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may waive re-
8 imbursement under paragraph (1) if the Secretary deter-
9 mines that such reimbursement would be inequitable or
10 would not be in the public interest.

11 **“SEC. 7665. DEFINITIONS.**

12 “In this subchapter:

13 “(1) The term ‘PHS officer’ means an officer
14 of the commissioned corps of the Public Health
15 Service.

16 “(2) The term ‘USU’ means the Uniformed
17 Services University of the Health Sciences.”.

18 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
19 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting,
20 after the item relating for section 7655, the following:

“SUBCHAPTER V-A—VETERANS AFFAIRS-PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE JOINT
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

“§ 7661. Establishment

“§ 7662. Interagency agreement

“§ 7663. Costs

“§ 7664. Obligated service

“§ 7665. Definitions”.