116TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

H. R. 2045

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 3, 2019

Mr. Wenstrup (for himself, Mr. Levin of California, Mr. David P. Roe of Tennessee, and Mr. Bilirakis) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition 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,
- 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Education,
- 5 Transition, and Opportunity Prioritization Plan Act of
- 6 2019" or the "VET OPP Act".

1 SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPOR-

- 2 TUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION.
- 3 (a) Veterans Economic Opportunity and Tran-
- 4 SITION ADMINISTRATION.—
- 5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Part V of title 38, United
- 6 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
- 7 following new chapter:

8 "CHAPTER 80—VETERANS ECONOMIC OP-

9 **PORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMIN-**

10 **ISTRATION**

11 "§ 8001. Organization of Administration

- 12 "(a) Veterans Economic Opportunity and
- 13 Transition Administration.—There is in the Depart-
- 14 ment of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Economic Oppor-
- 15 tunity and Transition Administration. The primary func-
- 16 tion of the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transi-
- 17 tion Administration is the administration of the programs
- 18 of the Department that provide assistance related to eco-
- 19 nomic opportunity to veterans and their dependents and
- 20 survivors.
- 21 "(b) Under Secretary for Economic Oppor-
- 22 TUNITY AND TRANSITION.—The Veterans Economic Op-
- 23 portunity and Transition Administration is under the
- 24 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and

[&]quot;8001. Organization of Administration.

[&]quot;8002. Functions of Administration.

[&]quot;8003. Annual report to Congress.

- 1 Transition, who is directly responsible to the Secretary for
- 2 the operations of the Administration.

3 "§ 8002. Functions of Administration

- 4 "The Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition
- 5 Administration is responsible for the administration of the
- 6 following programs of the Department:
- 7 "(1) Vocational rehabilitation and employment
- 8 programs.
- 9 "(2) Educational assistance programs.
- 10 "(3) Veterans' housing loan and related pro-
- 11 grams.
- 12 "(4) The verification of small businesses owned
- and controlled by veterans pursuant to subsection (f)
- of section 8127 of this title, including the adminis-
- tration of the database of veteran-owned businesses
- described in such subsection.
- 17 "(5) The Transition Assistance Program under
- section 1144 of title 10.
- 19 "(6) Any other program of the Department
- that the Secretary determines appropriate.

21 "§ 8003. Annual report to Congress

- 22 "The Secretary shall include in the annual report to
- 23 the Congress required by section 529 of this title a report
- 24 on the programs administered by the Under Secretary for
- 25 Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition. Each

- 1 such report shall include the following with respect to each
- 2 such program during the fiscal year covered by that re-
- 3 port:
- 4 "(1) The number of claims received.
- 5 "(2) The number of claims decided.
- 6 "(3) The average processing time for a claim.
- 7 "(4) The number of successful outcomes (as determined by the Secretary).
- 9 "(5) The number of full-time equivalent em-
- ployees.
- 11 "(6) The amounts expended for information
- technology.".
- 13 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The tables of
- chapters at the beginning of title 38, United States
- 15 Code, and of part V of title 38, United States Code,
- are each amended by inserting after the item relat-
- ing to chapter 79 the following new item:

- 18 (b) Effective Date.—Chapter 80 of title 38,
- 19 United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take
- 20 effect on October 1, 2020.
- 21 (c) Full-Time Employees.—For fiscal years 2019
- 22 and 2020, the total number of full-time equivalent employ-
- 23 ees authorized for the Veterans Benefits Administration
- 24 and the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition

1	Administration, as established under chapter 80 of title
2	38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), may
3	not exceed 23,899.
4	SEC. 3. UNDER SECRETARY FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC OP-
5	PORTUNITY AND TRANSITION.
6	(a) Under Secretary.—
7	(1) In general.—Chapter 3 of title 38, United
8	States Code, is amended by inserting after section
9	306 the following new section:
10	"§ 306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Op-
11	portunity and Transition
12	"(a) Under Secretary.—There is in the Depart-
13	ment an Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
14	tunity and Transition, who is appointed by the President,
15	by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The
16	Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and
17	Transition shall be appointed without regard to political
18	affiliation or activity and solely on the basis of dem-
19	onstrated ability in—
20	"(1) information technology; and
21	"(2) the administration of programs within the
22	Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Ad-
23	ministration or programs of similar content and
24	scope.

- 1 "(b) Responsibilities.—The Under Secretary for
- 2 Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition is the
- 3 head of, and is directly responsible to the Secretary for
- 4 the operations of, the Veterans Economic Opportunity and
- 5 Transition Administration.
- 6 "(c) Vacancies.—(1) Whenever a vacancy in the po-
- 7 sition of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
- 8 tunity and Transition occurs or is anticipated, the Sec-
- 9 retary shall establish a commission to recommend individ-
- 10 uals to the President for appointment to the position.
- 11 "(2) A commission established under this subsection
- 12 shall be composed of the following members appointed by
- 13 the Secretary:
- 14 "(A) Three persons representing education and
- training, vocational rehabilitation, employment, real
- estate, mortgage finance and related industries, and
- 17 survivor benefits activities affected by the Veterans
- 18 Economic Opportunity and Transition Administra-
- 19 tion.
- 20 "(B) Two persons representing veterans served
- by the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transi-
- tion Administration.
- 23 "(C) Two persons who have experience in the
- 24 management of private sector benefits programs of

- 1 similar content and scope to the economic oppor-
- 2 tunity and transition programs of the Department.
- 3 "(D) The Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- 4 "(E) The chairman of the Veterans' Advisory
- 5 Committee on Education formed under section 3692
- 6 of this title.
- 7 "(F) One person who has held the position of
- 8 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity
- 9 and Transition, if the Secretary determines that it
- is desirable for such person to be a member of the
- commission.
- 12 "(3) A commission established under this subsection
- 13 shall recommend at least three individuals for appoint-
- 14 ment to the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Eco-
- 15 nomic Opportunity and Transition. The commission shall
- 16 submit all recommendations to the Secretary. The Sec-
- 17 retary shall forward the recommendations to the President
- 18 and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate
- 19 and House of Representatives with any comments the Sec-
- 20 retary considers appropriate. Thereafter, the President
- 21 may request the commission to recommend additional in-
- 22 dividuals for appointment.
- 23 "(4) The Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant
- 24 Secretary of Veterans Affairs who performs personnel
- 25 management and labor relations functions shall serve as

the executive secretary of a commission established under 2 this subsection.". 3 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-4 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended 5 by inserting after the item relating to section 306 6 the following new item: "306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition.". 7 (b) Conforming Amendments.—Title 38, United States Code, is further amended— 9 (1) in section 306(c)(2), by striking subpara-10 graphs (A) and (E) and redesignating subpara-11 graphs (B), (C), (D), and (F), as subparagraphs (A) 12 through (D), respectively; (2) in section 317(d)(2), by inserting after 13 14 "Under Secretary for Benefits," the following: "the 15 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity 16 and Transition,"; 17 (3) in section 318(d)(2), by inserting after "Under Secretary for Benefits," the following: "the 18 19 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity 20 and Transition,"; 21 (4) in section 516(e)(2)(C), by striking "Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits" and inserting 22 "Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the 23 24 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity 25 and Transition";

- 1 (5) in section 541(a)(2)(B), by striking "Health 2 and the Under Secretary for Benefits" and inserting 3 "Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the 4 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity 5 and Transition";
 - (6) in section 542(a)(2)(B)(iii), by striking "Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits" and inserting "Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition";
 - (7) in section 544(a)(2)(B)(vi), by striking "Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits" and inserting "Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition";
 - (8) in section 709(c)(2)(A), by inserting after "Under Secretary for Benefits," the following: "the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition,";
 - (9) in section 7701(a), by inserting after "assistance" the following: ", other than assistance related to Economic Opportunity and Transition,"; and

- 1 (10) in section 7703, by striking paragraphs (2)
- 2 and (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as
- 3 paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively.
- 4 (c) Effective Date.—Section 306A of title 38,
- 5 United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and the
- 6 amendments made by this section, shall take effect on Oc-
- 7 tober 1, 2020.

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