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117th CONGRESS
2d Session

S. 2280

AN ACT

To provide PreCheck to certain severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ``Veterans Expedited TSA Screening Safe Travel Act'' or the ``VETS Safe Travel Act''.

SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF PRECHECK PROGRAM TO CERTAIN SEVERELY INJURED OR DISABLED VETERANS.

(a) In General.--Section 44927 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

``(g) Availability of PreCheck Program to Certain Severely Injured or Disabled Veterans.--

``(1) In general.--A veteran described in paragraph (2) is eligible for security screening under the PreCheck Program under section 44919 at no cost to the veteran if the veteran is able to meet the background check and other security requirements for participation in the program.

``(2) Veterans described.--A veteran described in this paragraph is a veteran who--

``(A) is enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code;

``(B) has--

``(i) lost, or lost use of, a limb;

``(ii) become paralyzed or partially paralyzed; or

``(iii) incurred permanent blindness; and

``(C) as a result of a loss, paralyzation or partial paralyzation, or blindness described in subparagraph (B), requires the use of a wheelchair, prosthetic limb, or other assistive device to aid with mobility.''

(b) Coordination on Implementation.--The Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly--

(1) develop and implement a process under which a veteran

Commented [GM1]: TSA supports providing the highest level of customer service to all who pass through our security checkpoints, while maintaining our security standards. Our policies and procedures focus on ensuring that all passengers are treated equally and with the dignity, respect, and courtesy they deserve.

The TSA PreCheck application program is required to be fee-funded and self-sustaining. Effective 11/2/22, the TSA PreCheck fee was reduced from \$85 to \$78 for a five-year membership and covers all costs to administer the program, including enrollment, vetting, adjudication, program administration, customer service support, etc.

In order to provide PreCheck at no cost to eligible veterans, TSA would require additional appropriations, given that 1) TSA does not have funding to provide this benefit and 2) it would be contrary to OMB policy for TSA to shift the additional cost to those TSA PreCheck members who pay the program application fee as it would conflict with the government-wide user-charge policy under OMB Circular No. A-25, which states, "A user charge...will be assessed against each identifiable recipient for special benefits derived from Federal activities beyond those received by the general public." See new Section 4.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently advised TSA that the estimated population described in the legislation is about 400,000 Veterans. Based upon this estimate, the cost to provide free TSA PreCheck to those individuals would be as follows:

- If all eligible Veterans chose to apply to PreCheck, TSA would need \$31.2M dollars in appropriated funds to cover the costs for the initial enrollment. However, TSA estimates approximately 25% of the eligible population would apply for PreCheck, which would equate to \$7.8M.
- Additional funds may be required by TSA and the VA to develop the initial solution (e.g., technology enhancements, process updates, etc.) to enable a "no cost" enrollment for this Veteran population. TSA will be reliant on the VA to identify this population and manage the distribution of no-cost enrollment "vouchers" for use at a TSA enrollment facility.
- Additional funds would be necessary after the initial funding to cover the costs for future renewals as TSA must re-vet individuals every five years as part of the risk-based security program.

It should be noted that TSA PreCheck expedited screening may not be the best solution for this Veteran population, as screening can be more complex when a passenger has disabilities or needs additional care. TSA offers traveler assistance programs that provide support for travelers, including the disabled Veteran population (i.e., TSA Cares and the Wounded Warriors program). These programs offer a helpline for travelers with disabilities, medical conditions, and other special circumstances, where travelers can request additional assistance during the security screening process, to include a local Passenger Support Specialist (PSS) who can provide on-the-spot assistance. PSS are TSA officers who have received additional training (... [1])

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described in paragraph (2) of subsection (g) of section 44927 of title 49, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), can receive the benefits under such subsection by not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act; and (2) provide to Congress a briefing on the status of implementing the process required by paragraph (1) by not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. OUTREACH FOR DISABLED VETERANS ON AVAILABILITY OF TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS.

(a) Coordination.--The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall develop and implement a process under which the Secretary provides to disabled veterans effective outreach about Transportation Security Administration programs designed to improve the screening process for passengers with disabilities.

(b) Further Enhancements to Ease Air Travel for Wounded Warriors and Other Disabled Veterans.--Notwithstanding subchapter I of chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code (commonly referred to as the ``Paperwork Reduction Act''), or any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, shall--

(1) engage appropriate veterans service organizations and other relevant organizations, as appropriate, to assess the awareness of veterans of relevant Transportation Security Administration programs; and

(2) examine the need and feasibility of other measures to improve travel security procedures for disabled veterans.

(c) Briefing Requirement.--Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Administrator of Transportation Security Administration shall jointly provide to Congress a briefing on the status of the implementation of subsections (a) and (b).

SEC. 4. CONTINGENT UPON FUNDING.

Implementation of the requirements set forth in this Act are contingent upon necessary funds being appropriated by Congress.

Passed the Senate June 16, 2022.

Attest:

Secretary.

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screen travelers with disabilities and medical conditions. Their role is to help with screening and provide other assistance, as needed, with the screening process.