

Please Support SB18-112:Veterans Outdoor Terrain Restoration Grant Program

SB18-112 creates an outdoor activity grant program for mental health therapy for veterans and provides a healthy outlet connecting veterans with the public lands they committed their lives to protect.

BACKGROUND: Time spent in nature provides a unique experience to foster mental and physical health, emotional resiliency, and continuing leadership development. The transition back to civilian life is difficult for many veterans and programs such as this can benefit reintegration. In addition to coping with physical injuries, veterans often deal with mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), making programs such as this a valuable resource for treatment and recovery.

Studies demonstrate that outdoor recreational experiences greatly improve the mental health and well-being of our returning veterans and their families. In one study, The University of Michigan evaluated the impacts of a small program, and participants reported improved psychological well being and social functioning. There are more studies documenting the positive outcomes of these types of programs that can be provided upon request.

The Veterans Outdoors bill will help ensure that organizations committed to supporting our veterans have access to funds to provide opportunities to get individuals outside.

Many of these programs will also allow veterans an opportunity to contribute to conservation work while utilizing the skills learned in the military, reflect on their experiences, and make lasting connections with other veterans.

The Veterans Outdoor Terrain Restoration and Recreation Mental Health grant program cash fund will be created and managed by the Division of Veterans Affairs. The grant program will be initially structured as a gifts, grants and donations system, and evolve into an established revenue source over time. The Division of Veterans Affairs will administer the grant program and will create a rule making process to determine who will be awarded grant dollars based on specific criteria.

For more information, contact :
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