

S 2963

A bill to improve and enhance the mental health care benefits available to members of the Armed Forces and veterans, to enhance counseling and other benefits available to survivors of members of the Armed Forces and veterans, and for other purposes.

**Congress:** 110 (2007–2009, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Armed Forces and National Security

**Introduced:** May 1, 2008

**Current Status:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**Latest Action:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. (May 1, 2008)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/senate-bill/2963>

Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Bond, Christopher S. [R-MO]

**Party:** Republican • **State:** MO • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (10 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Boxer, Barbara [D-CA]	D · CA		May 1, 2008
Sen. Dole, Elizabeth [R-NC]	R · NC		May 1, 2008
Sen. Domenici, Pete V. [R-NM]	R · NM		May 1, 2008
Sen. Murkowski, Lisa [R-AK]	R · AK		May 1, 2008
Sen. Obama, Barack [D-IL]	D · IL		May 1, 2008
Sen. Stevens, Ted [R-AK]	R · AK		May 1, 2008
Sen. Clinton, Hillary Rodham [D-NY]	D · NY		May 6, 2008
Sen. Collins, Susan M. [R-ME]	R · ME		May 6, 2008
Sen. Grassley, Chuck [R-IA]	R · IA		May 6, 2008
Sen. McCaskill, Claire [D-MO]	D · MO		May 6, 2008

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Veterans' Affairs Committee	Senate	Referred To	May 1, 2008

Subjects & Policy Tags

**Policy Area:**

Armed Forces and National Security

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
110 HR 6268	Related bill	<b>Jul 2, 2008:</b> Referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel.
110 S 3008	Related bill	<b>May 12, 2008:</b> Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide scholarships to individuals pursuing education or training in behavioral health care specialties that are critical to the operations of Vet Centers (centers for readjustment counseling and related mental health services for veterans) in order to recruit and retain individuals with such specialties for service in Vet Centers. Conditions the scholarship on agreeing to serve in such a capacity for whatever period the Secretary specifies in the agreement.

Makes any Armed Forces member who serves in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom eligible for readjustment counseling and related mental health services through Vet Centers regardless of whether the member is on active duty at the time of receipt of counseling and services.

Directs the Secretary, on receipt of a request for counseling from an individual who has been discharged or released from active service, to: (1) provide referrals to assist the individual in obtaining mental health care and services outside the Department of Veterans Affairs; and (2) if pertinent, advise such individual of the individual's rights to apply for review of the discharge or release.

Treats the suicide of a former member that occurs within two years after separation or retirement, if the member had a medical history of a combat-related mental health condition, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), as a death in line of duty for purposes of the survivors' eligibility to burial benefits and benefits under the Survivor Benefit Plan, laws administered by the Secretary, and the Social Security Act.

Directs the Secretary of Defense to award grants to nonprofit organizations that provide emotional support services for survivors of deceased members of the Armed Forces and deceased veterans through the survivors' peers.

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### **Actions Timeline**

- **May 1, 2008:** Introduced in Senate
- **May 1, 2008:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR S3715-3716)
- **May 1, 2008:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.