

## S 4441

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for peer support specialists for claimants who are survivors of military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

**Congress:** 117 (2021–2023, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

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

**Introduced:** Jun 22, 2022

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

**Latest Action:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. (Jun 22, 2022)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/4441>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Cortez Masto, Catherine [D-NV]

**Party:** Democratic • **State:** NV • **Chamber:** Senate

### Cosponsors (10 total)

| Cosponsor                          | Party / State | Role | Date Joined  |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------|--------------|
| Sen. Blumenthal, Richard [D-CT]    | D · CT        |      | Jun 22, 2022 |
| Sen. Boozman, John [R-AR]          | R · AR        |      | Jun 22, 2022 |
| Sen. Hirono, Mazie K. [D-HI]       | D · HI        |      | Jul 11, 2022 |
| Sen. Murkowski, Lisa [R-AK]        | R · AK        |      | Jul 13, 2022 |
| Sen. Cramer, Kevin [R-ND]          | R · ND        |      | Jul 25, 2022 |
| Sen. Stabenow, Debbie [D-MI]       | D · MI        |      | Sep 22, 2022 |
| Sen. Gillibrand, Kirsten E. [D-NY] | D · NY        |      | Nov 30, 2022 |
| Sen. King, Angus S., Jr. [I-ME]    | I · ME        |      | Dec 5, 2022  |
| Sen. Warren, Elizabeth [D-MA]      | D · MA        |      | Dec 5, 2022  |
| Sen. Durbin, Richard J. [D-IL]     | D · IL        |      | Dec 6, 2022  |

### Committee Activity

| Committee                   | Chamber | Activity    | Date         |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|
| Veterans' Affairs Committee | Senate  | Referred To | Jun 22, 2022 |

### Subjects & Policy Tags

**Policy Area:**

Armed Forces and National Security

### Related Bills

| Bill        | Relationship   | Last Action                                  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 117 HR 2724 | Identical bill | Dec 27, 2022: Became Public Law No: 117-271. |

This bill prescribes that a peer support specialist of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must not be responsible for providing assistance to a veteran regarding a claim for compensation for a covered mental health condition (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder) based on military sexual trauma (MST) experienced during active service. Such specialists must only provide counseling services, guidance, and support and must not participate in the adjudication of the claim.

As part of the forms for claims for compensation for a covered mental health condition based on MST, the VA must include an option for a veteran to elect to be referred to a MST trauma coordinator at the VA facility closest to the veteran's residence.

Additionally, the VA must (1) ensure that its peer support specialists receive annual training on providing peer support regarding MST, and (2) provide annual training on the processing of claims for compensation for covered mental health conditions based on MST to its MST coordinators and peer specialists.

### **Actions Timeline**

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- **Jun 22, 2022:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 22, 2022:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.