To direct the Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of the military departments to encourage female members who separate or retire from the Armed Forces during fiscal year 2020 to participate in the Women's Health Transition Training pilot program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. HOUHAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of the military departments to encourage female members who separate or retire from the Armed Forces during fiscal year 2020 to participate in the Women’s Health Transition Training pilot program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 “Servicewomen’s Health Transition Training Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Women are now the fastest growing cohort of veterans and are expected to double in population by 2045.

(2) Women comprise approximately 2,000,000 veterans in the United States and 10 percent of the total veteran population.

(3) Women veterans are nearly two times more likely to commit suicide than civilian women.

(4) On average, women do not connect with the Veterans Health Administration until 2.7 years after separating from military service.

(5) Female veterans have a higher rate of homelessness than their male counterparts.

(6) One in five female members of the Armed Forces report experiencing military sexual trauma.

(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY OBJECTIVES.—It is in the national interest of the United States to ensure female veterans receive a high quality of care by promoting programs and initiatives that—
(1) educate women separating from active duty in the Armed Forces of the services available to them through the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) encourage women to enroll in the system of enrollment of the Veterans Health Administration; and

(3) increase the number of women receiving health care from the Veterans Health Administration.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Department of Veterans Affairs, in piloting the Women’s Health Transition Assistance Program, has found that the pilot program has—

(1) educated hundreds of women, 99 percent of whom would recommend the program to others, in the process of separating or retiring from the Armed Forces, of the care they can receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) improved awareness among pilot program participants of services available from the Department of Veterans Affairs by 56 percent; and

(3) increased pilot program participants’ intent to enroll with the Department of Veterans Affairs by 13.1 percent, increased pilot program participants’ intent to use Veteran Affairs health care services by
15.6 percent, and increased pilot program participants’ intent to use Veterans Affairs suicide prevention services, if needed, by 19.3 percent.

SEC. 3. PARTICIPATION IN THE WOMEN'S HEALTH TRANSITION TRAINING PILOT PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) In General.—The Secretary of Defense shall direct—

(1) the Secretaries of the military departments to encourage female members who separate or retire from the Armed Forces during fiscal year 2020 to participate in the Women’s Health Transition Training pilot program of the Department of Veterans Affairs at locations selected by the Secretaries of the military departments; and

(2) commanders of military installations that have centers for the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code, to advertise the Women’s Health Transition Training pilot program to female members described in paragraph (1).

(b) Report.—Not later than February 1, 2021, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall submit to Congress a report re-
regarding participation described in subsection (a). The report shall include the following:

(1) The number of participants in the pilot program.

(2) The number of pilot program sessions and the locations at which the sessions were held.

(3) Available metrics including course satisfaction and improved awareness of health services furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(4) Barriers to expanding the pilot program to reach more female members of the Armed Forces.

(5) Barriers to offering the pilot program online to reach female members of the Armed Forces who cannot attend in person.

(6) Recommendations for legislation to improve or expand the pilot program.