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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R.

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit Members of Congress to use facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of meeting with constituents, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MAST introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit Members of Congress to use facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of meeting with constituents, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Improving Veterans
5 Access to Congressional Services Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. USE OF FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
2 **ERANS AFFAIRS BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Upon request of a Member of
4 Congress and subject to regulations prescribed under sub-
5 section (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall permit
6 the Member to use a facility of the Department of Vet-
7 erans Affairs for the purposes of meeting with constitu-
8 ents of the Member. The Secretary and the Administrator
9 of General Services shall jointly identify available spaces
10 in facilities of the Department for such purposes.

11 (b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the
12 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans
13 Affairs shall prescribe regulations regarding such use of
14 a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs by Mem-
15 bers of Congress. Regulations prescribed under this sub-
16 section—

17 (1) shall require that a space within a facility
18 of the Department provided to a Member under sub-
19 section (a) is—

20 (A) available during normal business
21 hours;

22 (B) located in an area that is visible and
23 accessible to constituents of the Member; and

24 (C) subject to a rate of rent (payable from
25 the Member's Representational Allowance or
26 the Senator's Official Personnel and Office Ex-

1 pense Account, as the case may be) that is
2 similar to the rate charged by the Adminis-
3 trator of General Services for office space in the
4 area of the facility;

5 (2) may not prohibit a Member from adver-
6 tising the use by the Member of a space within a fa-
7 cility of the Department under subsection (a);

8 (3) shall comply with sections 7321 through
9 7326 of title 5, United States Code (commonly re-
10 ferred to as the “Hatch Act”) and section
11 1.218(a)(14) of title 38, Code of Federal Regula-
12 tions (or successor regulation), by prohibiting activi-
13 ties including—

14 (A) campaigning in support of or opposi-
15 tion to any political office;

16 (B) statements or actions that solicit, sup-
17 port, or oppose any change to Federal law or
18 policy;

19 (C) any activity that interferes with secu-
20 rity or normal operation of the facility;

21 (D) photographing or recording a veteran
22 patient at such facility;

23 (E) photographing or recording a patient,
24 visitor to the facility, or employee of the De-

1 partment without the consent of such indi-
2 vidual; and

3 (F) photography or recording for the pur-
4 pose of political campaign materials;

5 (4) may not permit a Member of Congress to
6 use such a facility during the 60-day period pre-
7 ceding an election for Federal office in the jurisdic-
8 tion in which such facility is located; and

9 (5) may not unreasonably restrict use of a facil-
10 ity of the Department by a Member under sub-
11 section (a) if—

12 (A) there is space in such facility not in
13 regular use by personnel of the Department;
14 and

15 (B) use of such space shall not impede op-
16 erations of the Department in such facility.