

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To authorize the Department of Energy to conduct collaborative research with the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to improve healthcare services for veterans in the United States, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. ERNST introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To authorize the Department of Energy to conduct collaborative research with the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to improve healthcare services for veterans in the United States, 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 “Department of Energy  
5       Veterans’ Health Initiative Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7       In this Act:

1           (1) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department”  
2 means the Department of Energy.

3           (2) NATIONAL LABORATORY.—The term “Na-  
4 tional Laboratory” has the meaning given that term  
5 in section 2 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42  
6 U.S.C. 15801).

7           (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
8 the Secretary of Energy.

9 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

10         The purposes of this Act are to advance Department  
11 of Energy expertise in artificial intelligence and high per-  
12 formance computing in order to improve health outcomes  
13 for veteran populations by—

14           (1) supporting basic research through the appli-  
15 cation of artificial intelligence, high performance  
16 computing, modeling and simulation, machine learn-  
17 ing, and large scale data analytics to identify and  
18 solve outcome-defined challenges in the health  
19 sciences;

20           (2) maximizing the impact of the Department  
21 of Veterans Affairs’ health and genomics data  
22 housed at the National Laboratories, as well as data  
23 from other sources, on science, innovation, and  
24 health care outcomes through the use and advance-

1       ment of artificial intelligence and high-performance  
2       computing capabilities of the Department of Energy;

3           (3) promoting collaborative research through  
4       the establishment of partnerships to improve data  
5       sharing between Federal agencies, National Labora-  
6       tories, institutions of higher education, and non-  
7       profit institutions;

8           (4) establishing multiple scientific computing  
9       user facilities to house and provision available data  
10      to foster transformational outcomes; and

11          (5) driving the development of technology to im-  
12      prove artificial intelligence, high performance com-  
13      puting, and networking relevant to mission applica-  
14      tions of the Department of Energy, including mod-  
15      eling, simulation, machine learning, and advanced  
16      data analytics.

17 **SEC. 4. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY VETERANS HEALTH RE-**  
18 **SEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.**

19      (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish and  
20      carry out a research program in artificial intelligence and  
21      high performance computing, focused on the development  
22      of tools to solve big data challenges associated with vet-  
23      eran’s healthcare, and to support the efforts of the De-  
24      partment of Veterans Affairs to identify potential health  
25      risks and challenges utilizing data on long term

1 healthcare, health risks, and genomic data collected from  
2 veteran populations. The Secretary shall carry out this  
3 program through a competitive, merit-reviewed process,  
4 and consider applications from National Laboratories, in-  
5 stitutions of higher education, multi-institutional collabo-  
6 rations, and other appropriate entities.

7 (b) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—In carrying out the  
8 program established under subsection (a), the Secretary  
9 may—

10 (1) conduct basic research in modeling and sim-  
11 ulation, machine learning, large scale data analytics,  
12 and predictive analysis in order to develop novel or  
13 optimized algorithms for prediction of disease treat-  
14 ment and recovery;

15 (2) develop methods to accommodate large data  
16 sets with variable quality and scale, and to provide  
17 insight and models for complex systems;

18 (3) develop new approaches and maximize the  
19 use of algorithms developed through artificial intel-  
20 ligence, machine learning, data analytics, natural  
21 language processing, modeling and simulation, and  
22 develop new algorithms suitable for high perform-  
23 ance computing systems and large biomedical data  
24 sets;

1           (4) advance existing and construct new data en-  
2           claves capable of securely storing data sets provided  
3           by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department  
4           of Defense, and other sources; and

5           (5) promote collaboration and data sharing be-  
6           tween National Laboratories, research entities, and  
7           user facilities of the Department by providing the  
8           necessary access and secure data transfer capabili-  
9           ties.

10          (c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the program re-  
11         quired under subsection (a), the Secretary is authorized  
12         to—

13           (1) enter into memoranda of understanding in  
14           order to carry out reimbursable agreements with the  
15           Department of Veterans Affairs and other entities in  
16           order to maximize the effectiveness of Department  
17           of Energy research and development to improve vet-  
18           erans' healthcare;

19           (2) consult with the Department of Veterans  
20           Affairs and other Federal agencies as appropriate;  
21           and

22           (3) ensure that data storage meets all privacy  
23           and security requirements established by the Depart-  
24           ment of Veterans Affairs, and that access to data is  
25           provided in accordance with relevant Department of

1 Veterans Affairs data access policies, including in-  
2 formed consent.

3 (d) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date  
4 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit  
5 to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and  
6 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-  
7 resentatives, and the Committee on Energy and Natural  
8 Resources and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the  
9 Senate, a report detailing the effectiveness of—

10 (1) the interagency coordination between each  
11 Federal agency involved in the research program  
12 carried out under this section;

13 (2) collaborative research achievements of the  
14 program; and

15 (3) potential opportunities to expand the tech-  
16 nical capabilities of the Department.

17 (e) FUNDING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
18 shall devote \$27,000,000 to carry out the activities au-  
19 thorized under this section during fiscal years 2019  
20 through 2023, subject to the availability of appropriations,  
21 to come from amounts made available for medical and  
22 prosthetic research. This section shall be carried out using  
23 funds otherwise appropriated by law after the date of en-  
24 actment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 5. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, DATA ANALYTICS, AND**  
2 **COMPUTATIONAL RESEARCH PILOT PRO-**  
3 **GRAM.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a  
5 pilot program to develop tools for big data analytics by  
6 utilizing data sets generated by Federal agencies, institu-  
7 tions of higher education, nonprofit research organiza-  
8 tions, and industry in order to advance artificial intel-  
9 ligence technologies to solve complex, big data challenges.  
10 The Secretary shall carry out this program through a com-  
11 petitive, merit-reviewed process, and consider applications  
12 from National Laboratories, institutions of higher edu-  
13 cation, multi-institutional collaborations, and other appro-  
14 priate entities.

15 (b) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—In carrying out the  
16 pilot program established under subsection (a), the Sec-  
17 retary may—

18 (1) establish a cross-cutting research initiative  
19 to prevent duplication and coordinate research ef-  
20 forts in artificial intelligence and data analytics  
21 across the Department;

22 (2) conduct basic research in modeling and sim-  
23 ulation, artificial intelligence, machine learning,  
24 large scale data analytics, natural language proc-  
25 essing, and predictive analysis in order to develop  
26 novel or optimized predictive algorithms suitable for

1 high performance computing systems and large bio-  
2 medical data sets;

3 (3) develop multivariate optimization models to  
4 accommodate large data sets with variable quality  
5 and scale in order to visualize complex systems;

6 (4) establish multiple scientific computing user  
7 facilities to serve as data enclaves capable of se-  
8 curely storing data sets created by Federal agencies,  
9 institutions of higher education, nonprofit organiza-  
10 tions, or industry at National Laboratories; and

11 (5) promote collaboration and data sharing be-  
12 tween National Laboratories, research entities, and  
13 user facilities of the Department by providing the  
14 necessary access and secure data transfer capabili-  
15 ties.

16 (c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date  
17 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit  
18 to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of  
19 the House of Representatives and the Committee on En-  
20 ergy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report evalu-  
21 ating the effectiveness of the pilot program under sub-  
22 section (a), including basic research discoveries achieved  
23 in the course of the program and potential opportunities  
24 to expand the technical capabilities of the Department



1 through the development of artificial intelligence and data  
2 analytics technologies.

3 (d) FUNDING.—For purposes of carrying out this  
4 section, the Secretary of Energy shall devote \$52,000,000  
5 to carry out this section, which shall include \$26,000,000  
6 for each fiscal years 2019 and 2020, subject to the avail-  
7 ability of appropriations. This section shall be carried out  
8 using funds otherwise appropriated by law after the date  
9 of enactment of this Act.

10 **SEC. 6. SPENDING LIMITATION.**

11 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-  
12 priated to carry out this Act and the amendments made  
13 by this Act, and this Act and such amendments shall be  
14 carried out using amounts otherwise available for such  
15 purpose.