

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1188

To establish a task force to protect members of the Armed Forces, veterans,
and military families, from financial fraud.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 24, 2023

Mr. LYNCH introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish a task force to protect members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and military families, from financial fraud.

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 “Military Consumer
5 Protection Task Force Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Members of the Armed Forces, veterans,
9 and military families continue to be disproportion-

1 ately targeted and impacted by imposter scams, in-
2 vestment-related schemes, fake check scams, vet-
3 erans' charity scams, pension poaching, and other
4 methods of financial fraud.

5 (2) Financial fraud attacks targeting members
6 of the Armed Forces, veterans, and military depend-
7 ents increased by 69 percent from 2020 to 2021.

8 (3) In 2020, more than 56,000 military con-
9 sumers submitted fraud reports to the Federal
10 Trade Commission indicating a collective fraud loss
11 of approximately \$102 million; in 2021, over
12 110,000 military consumers submitted fraud reports
13 to the Federal Trade Commission indicating a collec-
14 tive fraud loss of approximately \$267 million, a 162-
15 percent increase in fraud loss over 2020.

16 (4) Veterans alone reported a collective fraud
17 loss of \$177 million in 2021, with members of the
18 Armed Forces reporting a nearly \$60 million total
19 fraud loss in 2021.

20 (5) The exponential increase in financial fraud
21 targeting members of the Armed Forces, veterans,
22 and military families demands a robust and coordi-
23 nated interagency approach that examines current
24 and emerging fraudulent schemes to safeguard the
25 financial security of our military consumers.

1 **SEC. 3. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE TO PROTECT MEM-**
2 **BERS, VETERANS, AND MILITARY FAMILIES**
3 **FROM FINANCIAL FRAUD.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after
5 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
6 Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans
7 Affairs, shall establish an Interagency Task Force on Fi-
8 nancial Fraud targeting members of the Armed Forces
9 and veterans (referred to in this section as the “Task
10 Force”).

11 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Task Force established
12 under this section shall include representatives from the
13 following:

14 (1) The Department of Defense.

15 (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs.

16 (3) The Federal Trade Commission.

17 (4) The Consumer Financial Protection Bu-
18 reau.

19 (5) The Department of Justice.

20 (6) The Federal Communications Commission.

21 (7) The Postal Inspection Service.

22 (8) Three representatives, appointed by the Sec-
23 retary of Defense in consultation with the Secretary
24 of the Department of Veterans Affairs, of non-gov-
25 ernmental organizations (at least one of whom is a
26 representative of a veterans’ service organization)

1 with expertise in identifying, preventing, and com-
2 battling financial fraud targeting members of the
3 Armed Forces, veterans, and military families.

4 (c) CONSULTATION.—The Task Force shall regularly
5 consult with the following:

6 (1) Members of the Armed Forces, veterans,
7 and members of military families that have been vic-
8 tims of financial fraud.

9 (2) Relevant Federal agencies and departments
10 that are not represented on the Task Force.

11 (3) Other relevant public and private sector
12 stakeholders, including State and local law enforce-
13 ment agencies, financial services providers, tech-
14 nology companies, and social media platforms.

15 (d) MEETINGS.—The Task Force shall not meet less
16 frequently than three times per calendar year.

17 (e) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Task Force is to
18 identify and examine current and developing methods of
19 financial fraud targeting members of the Armed Forces,
20 veterans, and military families and issue recommendations
21 to enhance efforts undertaken by Federal agencies to iden-
22 tify, prevent, and combat such financial fraud.

23 (f) DUTIES.—The duties of the Task Force shall in-
24 clude the following:

1 (1) Collecting and reviewing robust data per-
2 taining to medical billing, credit reporting, debt col-
3 lection, and other serious financial challenges facing
4 members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and mili-
5 tary families.

6 (2) Identifying and reviewing current methods
7 of financial exploitation targeting members of the
8 Armed Forces, veterans, and military families, in-
9 cluding—

10 (A) imposter or phishing scams;

11 (B) investment-related fraud;

12 (C) pension poaching;

13 (D) veterans benefit fraud;

14 (E) fraudulent offers pertaining to employ-
15 ment or business opportunities;

16 (F) predatory lending;

17 (G) veteran charity schemes;

18 (H) foreign money offers and fake check
19 scams;

20 (I) mortgage foreclosure relief and debt
21 management fraud;

22 (J) military allotment system abuse; and

23 (K) military records fraud.

24 (3) Identifying and evaluating the new financial
25 risks that emerging financial technologies, including

1 buy-now-pay-later credit and digital payment eco-
2 systems, may present to members of the Armed
3 Forces, veterans, and military families.

4 (4) Evaluating the efficacy of current Federal
5 programs, educational campaigns, policies, and stat-
6 utes, including the Military Lending Act and the
7 Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, in preventing and
8 combatting financial fraud targeting members of the
9 Armed Forces, veterans, and military families.

10 (5) Developing recommendations to enhance ef-
11 forts of Federal agencies to detect, prevent, and
12 combat financial fraud targeting members of the
13 Armed Forces, veterans, and military families.

14 (g) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
15 of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the
16 Task Force shall submit to the appropriate congressional
17 committees a report on its findings to date and rec-
18 ommendations to enhance the efforts of Federal agencies
19 to identify, prevent, and combat financial fraud targeting
20 members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and military fam-
21 ilies.

22 (h) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
23 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-
24 gressional committees” means the following:

1 (1) The Committee on Oversight and Reform of
2 the House of Representatives.

3 (2) The Committee on Armed Services of the
4 House of Representatives.

5 (3) The Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
6 House of Representatives.

7 (4) The Committee on Homeland Security and
8 Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

9 (5) The Committee on Armed Services of the
10 Senate.

11 (6) The Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
12 Senate.

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