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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPORT
118–98

VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING ACT OF 2023

JUNE 5, 2023.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, from the Committee on Small Business, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1606]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Small Business, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1606) to amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

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I. PURPOSE AND BILL SUMMARY

The purpose of H.R. 1606, the "Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2023" is to codify the Boots to Business Program, and

for other purposes. This bill amends Section 32 of the Small Business Act by adding a new subsection authorizing the Boots to Business Program for 5 years.

The bill updates the definition of Members of the Armed Forces and sets goals for the program, which include-in-depth training for servicemembers interested in owning a business, and development of tools to identify opportunities, draft business plans, identify sources of capital, connect with local resources for small businesses, and launch the business. This bill delineates the program components including an in-person entrepreneurship program.

It also gives the Small Business Administration (SBA) the authority to collaborate with public and private entities to develop the curricula, ensures Veterans Business Outreach Centers regularly participate in the program, and to the reasonable maximum extent, allows the participation of other resource partners as well.

The bill facilitates the sharing of course and outreach materials with the Secretary of Defense for inclusion in DOD websites, manuals, and other materials related to the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for distribution and display at local VA facilities.

The bill requires the SBA Administrator to provide a report to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives within 180 days after enactment of the legislation and annually thereafter. The report will evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the Boots to Business program.

II. NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) program provides free counseling, training, and resource partner referrals to eligible service members, veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, and military spouses.

One of the primary responsibilities of VBOC is to administer the Boots to Business (B2B) program. B2B is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by SBA as part of the Department of Defense's TAP. B2B provides participants with an overview of business ownership and is open to transitioning service members (including National Guard and Reserve) and their spouses.

Initially launched as a pilot initiative in 2012, B2B curriculum focuses on the key steps for evaluating business concepts and provides the foundational knowledge to develop a business plan. In addition, participants connect with SBA resources, including information on access to capital, counseling, training, and contracting opportunities.

In FY 2018, nearly 17,200 veterans, servicemembers, and military spouses stationed at military installations nationwide participated in the two-day course.

The National Defense Authorization Act of FY 2019 requires servicemembers participating in TAP to enroll in one of three capstone classes, which include: Accessing Higher Education, Career and Technical Training, and Entrepreneurship (B2B). It is expected that this new requirement will significantly increase the number of servicemembers who participate in B2B program.

III. HEARINGS

In the 118th Congress, the Committee on Small Business (the Committee) held one hearing examining the issues covered in H.R. 1606 on May 24, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. titled *"Saluting Service: Supporting Veteran Owned Small Businesses."* Members and witnesses discussed efforts to improve service member transition from the military to civilian life. One witness who transitioned from the military while Boots to Business was available noted she found the program helpful.

IV. COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

The Committee met in open session, with a quorum being present, on May 23, 2023, and ordered H.R. 1606 favorably reported to the House of Representatives. During the markup no amendments were offered.

V. COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee to list the recorded votes on the motion to report legislation and amendments thereto. The Committee voted to favorably report H.R. 1606 to the House of Representatives at 2:51 p.m.

118th Congress House Committee on Small Business Vote Record

Date: 5/23/23 Bill: HR 1606
Convened: 2:51 pm Adjourned:

Republicans	Aye	Nay	Present
Mr. Luetkemeyer (MO-03)	✓		
Mr. Stauber (MN-08)	✓		
Mr. Meuser (PA-09)	✓		
Ms. Van Duyne (TX-24)	✓		
Ms. Salazar (FL-27)	✓		
Mr. Mann (KS-01)			
Mr. Ellzey (TX-06)	✓		
Mr. Molinaro (NY-19)	✓		
Mr. Alford (MO-04)	✓		
Mr. Crane (AZ-02)	✓		
Mr. Bean (FL-04)			
Mr. Hunt (TX-38)	✓		
Mr. (La-Low-ta) Lalota (NY-01)	✓		
Chairman Williams (TX-25)	✓		
TOTALS:			

Mr. Chairman _____ Votes _____

Mr. Chairman _____ Off _____, Votes _____

Mr. Chairman on that vote _____ Ayes _____ Nays and _____ Present

Adopted - Reported favorably to the House

118th Congress House Committee on Small Business Vote Record

Date: Bill: HR 1606

Democrats	Aye	Nay	Present
Mr. Golden (ME-02)	✓		
Mr. M-fume (MD-07)	✓		
Mr. Phillips (MN-03)	✓		
Mr. Landsman (OH-01)	✓		
Mr. Mc-Gar-vey (KY-03)	✓		
Ms. Glue-sen-kamp Perez (WA-03)	✓		
Ms. (Skull- ton) Scholten (MI-03)	✓		
Mr. (Tan-a-dar) Thanedar (MI-13)	✓		
Ms. (Chew) Chu (CA-28)	✓		
Ms. Davids (KS-03)	✓		
Mr. Pappas (NH-01)			
Ranking Member Nydia Velazquez (NY-07)	✓		
TOTALS:			

VI. SECTION-BY-SECTION OF H.R. 1606

Section 1. Short title

This section designates H.R. 1606 as the "Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2023."

Section 2. Boots to Business Program

Subsection (1) Covered Individuals Defined. Covered Individual is defined as a member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves; individuals participating in TAP; Individuals who served active duty in any branch including National Guard or Reserves and was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable; and a spouse or depended of the previous individuals.

Subsection (2) Establishment. The SBA will carry out the Boots to Business program until September 30, 2028.

Subsection (3) Goals. This section states the Boots to Business program aims to provide covered individuals with tools critical to small business ownership.

Subsection (4) Program Components. This subsection outlines the program components. The program may contain a presentation on small business ownership, online business courses, in-person instruction on foundations of small business ownership and self-employment, and in-depth training online on creating a business plan. The SBA may collaborate with public and private entities in developing the program and modify its components in coordinating with those participating in Warriors in Transition program.

It requires the SBA to ensure Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC) participate in Boots to Business and use district offices and resource partners to the maximum extent practicable. It also allows SBA to make grants to VBOC, and resource partners, or other entities to carry out Boots to Business.

This section requires SBA to provide Boots to Business information to the Secretaries of DoD and Department of Labor for inclusion on their websites related to TAP, in the TAP manual, and in other manuals those Secretaries determine as necessary. It also requires the SBA to consult with VA Secretary to provide for distribution on VA's website and at VA facilities Boots to Business information that at minimum includes a description of the program and services provided, and eligibility requirements.

Finally, this section requires SBA to, upon request, share Boots to Business information to agencies that participate in TAP.

Subsection (5) Competitive Bidding Procedures. This section requires SBA to use competitive bid procedures to contracts or cooperative agreements used under Boots to business.

Subsection (6) Publication of Notice of Funding Opportunity. This section requires SBA to publish a notice of funding opportunity no later than 30 days before the deadline to submit applications for Boots to Business program.

Subsection (7) Report. This section requires an initial report no later than 180 days, then annually after, on the effectiveness of Boots to Business. The report can be a part of related Agency reports. The report must summarize grants awarded, total program cost, number of participants, and completion rates. The report shall include to the extent possible, participant demographics, number of participants that connect with an SBA district office or resource

partner, number of participants that start a small business, results of surveys that gauge quality, outcome, and results. The report will include an overall effectiveness evaluation based by SBA regions, an assessment of additional outcome measures identified by SBA Administrator, recommendations to improve the program, explanation of how the program has integrated with other transition programs and government resources, and any other information SBA deems necessary.

VII. CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee adopts as its as its own the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

H.R. 1606, Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2023
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Small Business on May 23, 2023

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2023	2023-2028	2023-2033
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	not estimated

Increases *net direct spending* in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2034?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No
		Mandate Effects	
Increases *on-budget deficits* in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2034?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

* = between zero and $500,000.

H.R. 1606 would authorize the Small Business Administration (SBA) to carry out the Boots to Business (B2B) Program over the 2023 2028 period. That program, which the SBA operates under authorities provided in Public Law 93 237, provides entrepreneurship training to members of the Armed Forces (including the National Guard or Reserves), veterans, and the spouses or dependents of those people. The legislation would authorize the SBA to make grants to Veteran Business Outreach Centers and to collaborate with public and private entities to develop training courses, which it does under its current program. H.R. 1606 also would require the SBA to share B2B program information with other veterans' agencies and to submit annual program reports to the Congress.

CBO estimates that implementing the new requirement in H.R. 1606 to share information would cost less than $500,000 over the 2023–2028 period, primarily for additional reporting requirements; any spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is David Hughes. The estimate was reviewed by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

VIII. NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a)(I) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following opinion and estimate with respect to new budget authority, entitlement authority, and tax expenditures. H.R. 1606 does not direct new spending, but instead reallocates funding independently authorized and appropriated.

IX. OVERSIGHT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII and clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the oversight findings and recommendations of the Committee with respect to the subject matter contained in the H.R. 1606 are incorporated into the descriptive portions of this report.

X. PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the performance goals and objectives of H.R. 1606 is to provide small business and entrepreneurship counseling and training to America's veterans and their families by reauthorizing the SBA's Boots to Business program for five years. The bill requires an annual report (after an initial report no later than 180 days), to the Committee on Small Business of the House and the Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate on the performance and effectiveness of the Boots to Business Program.

XI. STATEMENT OF DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, no provision of H.R. 1606 is known to be duplicative of another Federal program, including any program that was included in a report to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139 or the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

XII. CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, AND LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

With respect to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that the bill does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(e), 9(f), or 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

XIII. Federal Mandates Statement

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

XIV. Federal Advisory Committee Statement

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act were created by this legislation.

XV. Applicability to Legislative Branch

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

XVI. Statement of Constitutional Authority

Pursuant to clause 7 of Rule XII of the Rules of the House, the Committee finds that the authority for this legislation in Art. I, § 8, cl.1 of the Constitution of the United States.

XVII. Changes in Existing Law Made by the Bill, as Reported

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (new matter is printed in italics and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SMALL BUSINESS ACT

* * * * * * *

SEC. 32. VETERANS PROGRAMS.

(a) Office of Veterans Business Development.—There is established in the Administration an Office of Veterans Business Development, which shall be administered by the Associate Administrator for Veterans Business Development (in this section referred to as the "Associate Administrator") appointed under section 4(b)(1).

(b) Associate Administrator for Veterans Business Development.—The Associate Administrator—

(1) shall be an appointee in the Senior Executive Service;

(2) shall be responsible for the formulation, execution, and promotion of policies and programs of the Administration that provide assistance to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans and small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans. The Associate Administrator shall act as an ombudsman for full consideration of veterans in all programs of the Administration; and

(3) shall report to and be responsible directly to the Administrator.

(c) Interagency Task Force.—

(1) Establishment.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the President shall establish an interagency task force to coordinate the efforts of Federal

agencies necessary to improve capital and business development opportunities for, and ensure achievement of the pre-established Federal contracting goals for, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans (in this section referred to as the "task force").

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—The members of the task force shall include—

(A) the Administrator, who shall serve as chairperson of the task force; and

(B) a senior level representative from—

(i) the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(ii) the Department of Defense;

(iii) the Administration (in addition to the Administrator);

(iv) the Department of Labor;

(v) the Department of the Treasury;

(vi) the General Services Administration;

(vii) the Office of Management and Budget; and

(viii) 4 representatives from a veterans service organization or military organization or association, selected by the President.

(3) DUTIES.—The task force shall—

(A) consult regularly with veterans service organizations and military organizations in performing the duties of the task force; and

(B) coordinate administrative and regulatory activities and develop proposals relating to—

(i) improving capital access and capacity of small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans through loans, surety bonding, and franchising;

(ii) ensuring achievement of the pre-established Federal contracting goals for small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans through expanded mentor-protégé assistance and matching such small business concerns with contracting opportunities;

(iii) increasing the integrity of certifications of status as a small business concern owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans or a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans;

(iv) reducing paperwork and administrative burdens on veterans in accessing business development and entrepreneurship opportunities;

(v) increasing and improving training and counseling services provided to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans; and

(vi) making other improvements relating to the support for veterans business development by the Federal Government.

(d) PARTICIPATION IN TAP WORKSHOPS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Associate Administrator shall increase veteran outreach by ensuring that Veteran Business Outreach Centers regularly participate, on a nationwide basis, in the workshops of the Transition Assistance Program of the Department of Labor.

(2) PRESENTATIONS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), a Veteran Business Outreach Center may provide grants to entities located in Transition Assistance Program locations to make presentations on the opportunities available from the Administration for recently separating or separated veterans. Each presentation under this paragraph shall include, at a minimum, a description of the entrepreneurial and business training resources available from the Administration.

(3) WRITTEN MATERIALS.—The Associate Administrator shall—

(A) create written materials that provide comprehensive information on self-employment and veterans entrepreneurship, including information on resources available from the Administration on such topics; and

(B) make the materials created under subparagraph (A) available to the Secretary of Labor for inclusion in the Transition Assistance Program manual.

(4) REPORTS.—The Associate Administrator shall submit to Congress progress reports on the implementation of this subsection.

(e) WOMEN VETERANS BUSINESS TRAINING.—The Associate Administrator shall—

(1) compile information on existing resources available to women veterans for business training, including resources for—

(A) vocational and technical education;

(B) general business skills, such as marketing and accounting; and

(C) business assistance programs targeted to women veterans; and

(2) disseminate the information compiled under paragraph (1) through Veteran Business Outreach Centers and women's business centers.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

(1) $1,500,000 for fiscal year 2005; and

(2) $2,000,000 for fiscal year 2006.

(g) ACCESS TO SURPLUS PROPERTY FOR VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

(A) the term "foreign excess property" has the meaning given the term in section 102 of title 40, United States Code; and

(B) the term "state agency" has the meaning given the term, including the roles and responsibilities assigned, in section 549 of title 40, United States Code.

(2) REQUIREMENT.—The Administrator, in coordination with the Administrator of General Services, shall provide access to and manage the distribution of surplus property, and foreign excess property returned to a State for handling as surplus

property, owned by the United States under chapter 7 of title 40, United States Code, to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans (as verified by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 8127 of title 38, United States Code) pursuant to a memorandum of agreement between the Administrator, the Administrator of General Services, and the head of the applicable state agency for surplus properties and in accordance with section 549 of title 40, United States Code.

(h) BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.—

(1) COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "covered individual" means—

(A) a member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves;

(B) an individual who is participating in the Transition Assistance Program established under section 1144 of title 10, United States Code;

(C) an individual who—

(i) served on active duty in any branch of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves; and

(ii) was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable; and

(D) a spouse or dependent of an individual described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C).

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—During the period beginning on the date of enactment of this subsection and ending on September 30, 2028, the Administrator shall carry out a program to be known as the "Boots to Business Program" to provide entrepreneurship training to covered individuals.

(3) GOALS.—The goals of the Boots to Business Program are to—

(A) provide assistance and in-depth training to covered individuals interested in business ownership; and

(B) provide covered individuals with the tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to identify a business opportunity, draft a business plan, identify sources of capital, connect with local resources for small business concerns, and start up a small business concern.

(4) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Boots to Business Program may include—

(i) a presentation providing exposure to the considerations involved in self-employment and ownership of a small business concern;

(ii) an online, self-study course focused on the basic skills of entrepreneurship, the language of business, and the considerations involved in self-employment and ownership of a small business concern;

(iii) an in-person classroom instruction component providing an introduction to the foundations of self employment and ownership of a small business concern; and

(iv) in-depth training delivered through online instruction, including an online course that leads to the creation of a business plan.

(B) COLLABORATION.—The Administrator may—

(i) collaborate with public and private entities to develop course curricula for the Boots to Business Program; and

(ii) modify program components in coordination with entities participating in a Warriors in Transition program, as defined in section 738(e) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (10 U.S.C. 1071 note).

(C) USE OF RESOURCE PARTNERS AND DISTRICT OFFICES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

(I) ensure that Veteran Business Outreach Centers regularly participate, on a nationwide basis, in the Boots to Business Program; and

(II) to the maximum extent practicable, use district offices of the Administration and a variety of other resource partners and entities in administering the Boots to Business Program.

(ii) GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying out clause (i), the Administrator may make grants to Veteran Business Outreach Centers, other resource partners, or other entities to carry out components of the Boots to Business Program.

(D) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—The Administrator shall make available to the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor information regarding the Boots to Business Program, including all course materials and outreach materials related to the Boots to Business Program, for inclusion on the websites of the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor relating to the Transition Assistance Program, in the Transition Assistance Program manual, and in other relevant materials available for distribution from the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor.

(E) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—In consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Administrator shall make available for distribution and display on the website of the Department of Veterans Affairs and at local facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs outreach materials regarding the Boots to Business Program, which shall, at a minimum—

(i) describe the Boots to Business Program and the services provided; and

(ii) include eligibility requirements for participating in the Boots to Business Program.

(F) AVAILABILITY TO OTHER PARTICIPATING AGENCIES.—The Administrator shall ensure information regarding the Boots to Business program, including all course materials and outreach materials related to the Boots to Business Program, is made available to other participating agencies in the Transition Assistance Program and upon request of other agencies.

(5) COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCEDURES.—The Administration shall use relevant competitive bidding procedures with respect

to any contract or cooperative agreement executed by the Administration under the Boots to Business Program.

(6) PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY.—Not later than 30 days before the deadline for submitting applications for any funding opportunity under the Boots to Business Program, the Administration shall publish a notice of the funding opportunity.

(7) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, and not less frequently than annually thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report on the performance and effectiveness of the Boots to Business Program, which—

(A) may be included as part of another report submitted to such committees by the Administrator related to the Office of Veterans Business Development; and

(B) shall summarize available information relating to—

(i) grants awarded under paragraph (4)(C);

(ii) the total cost of the Boots to Business Program;

(iii) the number of program participants using each component of the Boots to Business Program;

(iv) the completion rates for each component of the Boots to Business Program;

(v) to the extent possible—

(I) the demographics of program participants, to include gender, age, race, ethnicity, and relationship to military;

(II) the number of program participants that connect with a district office of the Administration, a Veteran Business Outreach Center, or another resource partner of the Administration;

(III) the number of program participants that start a small business concern;

(IV) the results of the Boots to Business and Boots to Business Reboot course quality surveys conducted by the Office of Veterans Business Development before and after attending each of those courses, including a summary of any comments received from program participants;

(V) the results of the Boots to Business Program outcome surveys conducted by the Office of Veterans Business Development, including a summary of any comments received from program participants; and

(VI) the results of other germane participant satisfaction surveys;

(C) an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the Boots to Business Program based on each geographic region covered by the Administration during the most recent fiscal year;

(D) an assessment of additional performance outcome measures for the Boots to Business Program, as identified by the Administrator;

(E) any recommendations of the Administrator for improvement of the Boots to Business Program, which may include expansion of the types of individuals who are covered individuals;

(F) an explanation of how the Boots to Business Program has been integrated with other transition programs and related resources of the Administration and other Federal agencies; and

(G) any additional information the Administrator determines necessary.

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