

113TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 733

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide certain employees of Members of Congress and certain employees of State or local governmental agencies with access to case-tracking information of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2013

Mr. RUNYAN (for himself and Mr. WALZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide certain employees of Members of Congress and certain employees of State or local governmental agencies with access to case-tracking information of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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 “Access to Veterans  
5 Benefits Improvement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROVISION OF ACCESS TO CASE-TRACKING INFOR-**  
2 **MATION.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 59 of title 38, United  
4 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
5 lowing:

6 **“§ 5906. Provision of access to case-tracking informa-**  
7 **tion**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) In accordance with sub-  
9 section (b), the Secretary shall provide a covered employee  
10 with access to the case-tracking system to provide a vet-  
11 eran with information regarding the status of a claim sub-  
12 mitted by such veteran, regardless of whether such em-  
13 ployee is acting under a power of attorney executed by  
14 such veteran.

15 “(2) In providing a covered employee with access to  
16 the case-tracking system under paragraph (1), the Sec-  
17 retary shall ensure—

18 “(A) that such access—

19 “(i) is provided in a manner that does not  
20 allow such employee to modify the data con-  
21 tained in such system; and

22 “(ii) does not include access to medical  
23 records; and

24 “(B) that each time a covered employee ac-  
25 cesses such system, the employee must certify that  
26 such access is for official purposes only.

1       “(b) PRIVACY CERTIFICATION COURSE.—The Sec-  
2 retary may not provide a covered employee with access to  
3 the case-tracking system under subsection (a)(1) unless  
4 the covered employee has successfully completed a certifi-  
5 cation course on privacy issues provided by the Secretary.

6       “(c) TREATMENT OF DISCLOSURE.—The access to  
7 information by a covered employee pursuant to subsection  
8 (a)(1) shall be deemed to be—

9               “(1) a covered disclosure under section 552a(b)  
10 of title 5; and

11               “(2) a permitted disclosure under regulations  
12 promulgated under section 264(c) of the Health In-  
13 surance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996  
14 (42 U.S.C. 1320d–2 note).

15       “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16               “(1) The term ‘case-tracking system’ means the  
17 system of the Department of Veterans Affairs that  
18 provides information regarding the status of a claim  
19 submitted by a veteran.

20               “(2) The term ‘covered employee’ means—

21                       “(A) an employee of a Member of Congress  
22 who assists the constituents of the Member with  
23 issues regarding departments or agencies of the  
24 Federal Government; or

1           “(B) an employee of a State or local gov-  
2           ernmental agency (including a veterans service  
3           officer) who, in the course of carrying out the  
4           responsibilities of such employment, assists vet-  
5           erans with claims for any benefit under the  
6           laws administered by the Secretary.”.

7           (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
8           at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding  
9           at the end the following new item:

“5906. Provision of access to case-tracking information.”.

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