

Union Calendar No. 477

118TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 7816

[Report No. 118-576]

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development center for an assessment of notice letters that the Secretary sends to claimants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 26, 2024

Mr. DUARTE (for himself, Mr. BOST, Mr. VALADAO, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. D'ESPOSITO, and Ms. BUDZINSKI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

JULY 8, 2024

Additional sponsors: Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. CISCOMANI, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. LAWLER, and Ms. TENNEY

JULY 8, 2024

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on March 26, 2024]

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development center for an assessment of notice letters that the Secretary sends to claimants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, 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 “Clear Communication*
5 *for Veterans Claims Act”.*

6 **SEC. 2. INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF NOTICES THAT THE**
7 **SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SENDS**
8 **TO CLAIMANTS.**

9 (a) *AGREEMENT.*—*Not later than 30 days after the*
10 *date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans*
11 *Affairs shall seek to enter into an agreement with an*
12 *FFRDC for an assessment of notices that the Secretary*
13 *sends to claimants.*

14 (b) *ASSESSMENT.*—*An FFRDC that enters to an*
15 *agreement under subsection (a) shall submit to the Sec-*
16 *retary a written assessment of such notices. The assessment*
17 *shall include the following:*

18 (1) *The determination of the FFRDC, made in*
19 *consultation with covered entities, whether each such*
20 *notice may be feasibly altered to reduce paper con-*
21 *sumption by, and costs to, the Federal Government.*

22 (2) *The recommendations of the FFRDC regard-*
23 *ing how the Secretary may make such notices clearer*
24 *to claimants, better organized, and more concise.*

1 (c) *REPORT; IMPLEMENTATION.*—Not later than 90
2 days after the Secretary receives the assessment under sub-
3 section (b), the Secretary shall—

4 (1) submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Af-
5 fairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a
6 copy of such assessment; and

7 (2) implement the recommendations in the as-
8 sessment that are in compliance with the laws admin-
9 istered by the Secretary.

10 (d) *DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.*—The Secretary
11 shall complete the implementation of such recommendations
12 pursuant to subsection (c)(2) by not later than one year
13 after the date on which the Secretary commences such im-
14 plementation.

15 (e) *DEFINITIONS.*—In this section:

16 (1) The term “FFRDC” means a federally fund-
17 ed research and development center.

18 (2) The term “covered entities” includes—

19 (A) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

20 (B) an expert in laws administered by the
21 Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

22 (C) a veterans service organization recog-
23 nized under section 5902 of title 38, United
24 States Code; and

25 (D) an entity that advocates for veterans.

1 (3) *The terms “claimant” and “notice” have the*
2 *meanings given such terms in section 5100 of title 38,*
3 *United States Code.*

4 **SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.**

5 *The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38,*
6 *United States Code, is amended by striking “November 15,*
7 *2031” each place it appears and inserting “November 29,*
8 *2031”.*

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