

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1831

To expand eligibility for certain housing programs for qualified volunteer first responders.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself and Mr. TESTER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To expand eligibility for certain housing programs for qualified volunteer first responders.

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 “Volunteer First Re-
5 sponder Housing Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) BONA FIDE VOLUNTEER; ELIGIBLE EM-
9 PLOYER; QUALIFIED SERVICES.—The terms “bona
10 fide volunteer”, “eligible employer”, and “qualified

1 services” have the meanings given those terms in
2 section 457(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of
3 1986.

4 (2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe”
5 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
6 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
7 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

8 (3) QUALIFIED VOLUNTEER FIRST RE-
9 SPONDER.—The term “qualified volunteer first re-
10 sponder” means any individual who—

11 (A) is a bona fide volunteer performing
12 qualified services for an eligible employer;

13 (B) has volunteered for not less than 2
14 continuous years for an eligible employer;

15 (C) during each of the 2 years described in
16 subparagraph (B)—

17 (i) met the minimum requirements for
18 active membership established by the eligi-
19 ble employer; or

20 (ii) if the eligible employer did not es-
21 tablish minimum requirements, volunteered
22 for not less than 200 hours; and

23 (D) is certified as a firefighter or other re-
24 sponder in the State, unit of general local gov-

1 ernment, or Indian tribe in which the individual
2 is serving as volunteer.

3 **SEC. 3. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SINGLE FAMILY**
4 **HOUSING GUARANTEED LOAN PROGRAM.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—A qualified volunteer first re-
6 sponder who submits to the Secretary of Agriculture (re-
7 ferred to in this section as the “Secretary”) a verification
8 letter in accordance with subsection (b) shall be eligible
9 for a verified adjustment in annual income under section
10 3555.152(c) of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (or
11 successor regulations), in the amount of \$18,000.

12 (b) VERIFICATION LETTER.—To be eligible for a
13 verified deduction under subsection (a), a qualified volun-
14 teer first responder shall submit to the Secretary a
15 verification letter from the head of the eligible employer
16 for which the qualified volunteer first responder volun-
17 teers, which shall—

18 (1) include the date on which the qualified vol-
19 unteer first responder joined the eligible employer as
20 a volunteer;

21 (2) attest to the Secretary that the qualified
22 volunteer first responder—

23 (A) continuously served as a volunteer for
24 the eligible employer during the 2-year period
25 preceding the date of the verification letter; and

1 (B) during each of the 2 years described in
2 subparagraph (A)—

3 (i) met the minimum requirements for
4 active membership established by the eligi-
5 ble employer; or

6 (ii) if the eligible employer did not es-
7 tablish minimum requirements, volunteered
8 for not less than 200 hours; and

9 (3) include a copy of the certification of the
10 qualified volunteer first responder as a firefighter or
11 other responder in the State, unit of general local
12 government, or Indian tribe in which the individual
13 served as a volunteer.

14 **SEC. 4. GOOD NEIGHBOR NEXT DOOR SALES PROGRAM.**

15 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 (1) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department”
17 means the Department of Housing and Urban De-
18 velopment.

19 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
20 the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

21 (b) AMENDMENTS.—The Secretary shall amend—

22 (1) section 291.530 of title 24, Code of Federal
23 Regulations, to provide that a qualified volunteer
24 first responder qualifies as a firefighter or emer-
25 gency medical technician for purposes of the Good

1 Neighbor Next Door Sales Program of the Depart-
2 ment; and

3 (2) section 291.515 of title 24, Code of Federal
4 Regulations, to provide that, to qualify to purchase
5 a home through the Good Neighbor Next Door Sales
6 Program of the Department, a qualified volunteer
7 first responder shall submit to the Secretary a
8 verification letter from the head of the eligible em-
9 ployer for which the qualified volunteer first re-
10 sponder volunteers, which shall—

11 (A) include the date on which the qualified
12 volunteer first responder joined the eligible em-
13 ployer as a volunteer;

14 (B) attest to the Secretary that the quali-
15 fied volunteer first responder—

16 (i) continuously served as a volunteer
17 for the eligible employer during the 2-year
18 period preceding the date of the verifica-
19 tion letter; and

20 (ii) during each of the 2 years de-
21 scribed in clause (i)—

22 (I) met the minimum require-
23 ments for active membership estab-
24 lished by the eligible employer; or

1 (II) if the eligible employer did
2 not establish minimum requirements,
3 volunteered for not less than 200
4 hours; and

5 (C) include a copy of the certification of
6 the qualified volunteer first responder as a fire-
7 fighter or other responder in the State, unit of
8 general local government, or Indian tribe in
9 which the individual served as a volunteer.

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