

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2635

To require the Secretary of State to submit a plan to eliminate the backlog of passport applications due to the COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 5, 2021

Mr. OSSOFF introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To require the Secretary of State to submit a plan to eliminate the backlog of passport applications due to the COVID–19 pandemic, 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 “Passport Backlog
5 Elimination Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PLAN TO ELIMINATE PASSPORT APPLICATION**
7 **BACKLOG.**

8 (a) **DEFINED TERM.**—In this section, the term “ap-
9 propriate congressional committees” means—

1 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
2 Senate;

3 (2) the Committee on Homeland Security and
4 Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

5 (3) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
6 House of Representatives; and

7 (4) the Committee on Oversight and Reform of
8 the House of Representatives.

9 (b) IN GENERAL.—Not later than October 30, 2021,
10 or 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,
11 whichever is later, after consultation with the appropriate
12 congressional committees, the Secretary of State shall sub-
13 mit a plan to the appropriate congressional committees,
14 containing the actionable strategies described in sub-
15 section (c), to ensure that the backlog of passport applica-
16 tions due to the COVID–19 pandemic is eliminated in a
17 timely manner in order to promote the national security
18 and economic interests of the United States.

19 (c) ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES.—The actionable strat-
20 egies described in this subsection are—

21 (1) eliminating the backlog of at least
22 1,400,000 passport applications;

23 (2) establishing a timeline for the elimination of
24 such backlog;

25 (3) ensuring that—

1 (A) the expected processing time for rou-
2 tine passport applications is between 6 and 8
3 weeks;

4 (B) the expected processing time for expe-
5 dited passport applications is between 2 to 3
6 weeks; and

7 (C) the expected processing time for expe-
8 dited passport applications for Federal Govern-
9 ment personnel is not more than 8 business
10 days;

11 (4) ensuring the safety of Department of State
12 personnel and customers and compliance with all ap-
13 plicable Federal, State, and local health and social
14 distancing guidelines; and

15 (5) offering expedited service for applicants re-
16 quiring a passport for purposes related to their em-
17 ployment.

18 (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 30 days after
19 the submission of the plan required under subsection (b),
20 the Secretary of State shall begin implementing the plan
21 to eliminate the backlog of passport applications due to
22 the COVID–19 pandemic.

23 (e) INSPECTOR GENERAL AUDIT.—Not later than
24 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
25 Inspector General of the Department of State shall submit

1 to the appropriate congressional committees the results of
2 an audit analyzing—

3 (1) the elimination of the passport application
4 backlog required by the plan submitted pursuant to
5 subsection (b); and

6 (2) the Department of State’s efforts to carry
7 out the actionable strategies described in subsection
8 (c).

9 **SEC. 3. TERMINATION OF REQUIREMENTS.**

10 The requirements under this Act shall terminate on
11 September 30, 2021, if, on such date—

12 (1) all of the passport applications received be-
13 fore June 15, 2021, have been processed; and

14 (2) the Department of State has resumed ac-
15 cepting passport applications for routine and expe-
16 dited processing.

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