

Calendar No. 656117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION**S. 4816****[Report No. 117-265]**

To require the Archivist of the United States to submit to Congress a comprehensive plan for reducing the backlog of requests for records from the National Personnel Records Center, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. SULLIVAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

DECEMBER 15, 2022

Reported by Mr. PETERS, with an amendment

[Omit the part struck through and insert the part printed in *italic*]

A BILL

To require the Archivist of the United States to submit to Congress a comprehensive plan for reducing the backlog of requests for records from the National Personnel Records Center, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Access for Veterans
3 to Records Act of 2022”.

4 **SEC. 2. PLAN TO ELIMINATE RECORDS BACKLOG AT THE**
5 **NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER.**

6 (a) **PLAN REQUIRED.**—Not later than 60 days after
7 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Archivist of the
8 United States shall submit to the appropriate congres-
9 sional committees a comprehensive plan to eliminate the
10 backlog of requests for records from the National Per-
11 sonnel Records Center and to improve the efficiency and
12 responsiveness of operations at the National Personnel
13 Records Center, that includes, at a minimum, the fol-
14 lowing:

15 (1) The number and percentage of unresolved
16 veteran record requests that have been pending for
17 more than—

18 (A) 20 days;

19 (B) 90 days; and

20 (C) one year.

21 (2) Target timeframes to eliminate the backlog.

22 (3) A detailed plan for using existing funds to
23 improve information technology infrastructure, in-
24 cluding secure access to appropriate agency Federal
25 records, to prevent future backlogs.

1 (4) Actions to improve customer service for re-
2 questers.

3 (5) Measurable goals with respect to the com-
4 prehensive plan and metrics for tracking progress
5 toward such goals.

6 (6) Strategies to prevent future record request
7 backlogs, including backlogs caused by an event that
8 prevents employees of the Center from reporting to
9 work in person.

10 (b) UPDATES.—Not later than 90 days after the date
11 on which the comprehensive plan is submitted under sub-
12 section (a), and semiannually thereafter until the National
13 Personnel Records Center resolves 90 percent of all re-
14 quests for separation documents (other than documents
15 subject to fees or involving records damaged or lost in the
16 1973 fire) in 20 days or less, the Archivist of the United
17 States shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
18 mittees an update of such plan that—

19 (1) describes progress made by the National
20 Personnel Records Center during the preceding 180-
21 day period with respect to record request backlog re-
22 duction and efficiency and responsiveness improve-
23 ment;

24 (2) provides data on progress made toward the
25 goals identified in the comprehensive plan; and

1 (3) describes any changes made to the com-
2 prehensive plan.

3 (c) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—In carrying out
4 subsections (a) and (b), the Archivist of the United States
5 shall consult with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

6 (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
7 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-
8 gressional committees” means—

9 (1) the Committee on Homeland Security and
10 Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Vet-
11 erans’ Affairs of the Senate; and

12 (2) the Committee on Oversight and Reform
13 and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
14 House of Representatives.

15 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL FUNDING.**

16 In addition to amounts otherwise available, there is
17 authorized to be appropriated to the National Archives
18 ~~and Records Administration, \$20,000,000 to address~~
19 ~~backlogs in responding to requests from veterans for mili-~~
20 ~~tary personnel records. and Records Administration,~~
21 *\$60,000,000 to address backlogs in responding to requests*
22 *from veterans for military personnel records, improve cy-*
23 *bersecurity, improve digital preservation and access to ar-*
24 *chival Federal records, and address backlogs in requests*
25 *made under section 552 of title 5, United States Code (com-*

1 *monly referred to as the “Freedom of Information Act”*).
2 *Such amounts may also be used for the Federal Records*
3 *Center Program.*

4 **SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL STAFFING.**

5 Not later than 30 days after the date of the enact-
6 ment of this Act, the Archivist of the United States shall
7 ensure that the National Personnel Records Center main-
8 tains staffing levels that enable the maximum processing
9 of records requests possible in order to achieve the per-
10 formance goal of responding to 90 percent of all requests
11 for separation documents (other than documents subject
12 to fees or involving records damaged or lost in the 1973
13 fire) serviced in 20 days or less.

14 **SEC. 5. ADDITIONAL REPORTING.**

15 The Inspector General for the National Archives and
16 Records Administration shall, for two years following the
17 date of the enactment of this Act, include in every semi-
18 annual report submitted to Congress pursuant to the In-
19 spector General Act of 1978, a detailed summary of—

20 (1) efforts taken by the National Archives and
21 Records Administration to address the backlog of
22 records requests at the National Personnel Records
23 Center; and

24 (2) any recommendations for action proposed
25 by the Inspector General related to reducing the

1 backlog of records requests at the National Per-
2 sonnel Records Center and the status of compliance
3 with those recommendations by the National Ar-
4 chives and Records Administration.

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