

Public Law 106-419
106th Congress

An Act

Nov. 1, 2000
[S. 1402]

To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the rates of educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill, to improve procedures for the adjustment of rates of pay for nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make other improvements in veterans educational assistance, health care, and benefits programs, and for other purposes.

Veterans
Benefits and
Health Care
Improvement Act
of 2000.
38 USC 101 note.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000”.

(b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.

TITLE I—EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Montgomery GI Bill Educational Assistance

- Sec. 101. Increase in rates of basic educational assistance under Montgomery GI Bill.
- Sec. 102. Uniform requirement for high school diploma or equivalency before application for Montgomery GI Bill benefits.
- Sec. 103. Repeal of requirement for initial obligated period of active duty as condition of eligibility for Montgomery GI Bill benefits.
- Sec. 104. Additional opportunity for certain VEAP participants to enroll in basic educational assistance under Montgomery GI Bill.
- Sec. 105. Increased active duty educational assistance benefit for contributing members.

Subtitle B—Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance

- Sec. 111. Increase in rates of survivors' and dependents' educational assistance.
- Sec. 112. Election of certain recipients of commencement of period of eligibility for survivors' and dependents' educational assistance.
- Sec. 113. Adjusted effective date for award of survivors' and dependents' educational assistance.
- Sec. 114. Availability under survivors' and dependents' educational assistance of preparatory courses for college and graduate school entrance exams.

Subtitle C—General Educational Assistance

- Sec. 121. Revision of educational assistance interval payment requirements.
- Sec. 122. Availability of education benefits for payment for licensing or certification tests.
- Sec. 123. Increase for fiscal years 2001 and 2002 in aggregate annual amount available for State approving agencies for administrative expenses.

TITLE II—HEALTH PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Personnel Matters

- Sec. 201. Annual national pay comparability adjustment for nurses employed by Department of Veterans Affairs.

- Sec. 202. Special pay for dentists.
- Sec. 203. Exemption for pharmacists from ceiling on special salary rates.
- Sec. 204. Temporary full-time appointments of certain medical personnel.
- Sec. 205. Qualifications of social workers.
- Sec. 206. Physician assistant adviser to Under Secretary for Health.
- Sec. 207. Extension of voluntary separation incentive payments.

Subtitle B—Military Service Issues

- Sec. 211. Findings and sense of Congress concerning use of military histories of veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs health care.
- Sec. 212. Study of post-traumatic stress disorder in Vietnam veterans.

Subtitle C—Medical Administration

- Sec. 221. Department of Veterans Affairs Fisher Houses.
- Sec. 222. Exception to recapture rule.
- Sec. 223. Sense of Congress concerning cooperation between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense in the procurement of medical items.
- Sec. 224. Technical and conforming changes.

Subtitle D—Construction Authorization

- Sec. 231. Authorization of major medical facility projects.
- Sec. 232. Authorization of appropriations.

Subtitle E—Real Property Matters

- Sec. 241. Change to enhanced use lease congressional notification period.
- Sec. 242. Release of reversionary interest of the United States in certain real property previously conveyed to the State of Tennessee.
- Sec. 243. Demolition, environmental cleanup, and reversion of Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Allen Park, Michigan.
- Sec. 244. Conveyance of certain property at the Carl Vinson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Dublin, Georgia.
- Sec. 245. Land conveyance, Miles City Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center complex, Miles City, Montana.
- Sec. 246. Conveyance of Fort Lyon Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Colorado, to the State of Colorado.
- Sec. 247. Effect of closure of Fort Lyon Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center on administration of health care for veterans.

TITLE III—COMPENSATION, INSURANCE, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Compensation Program Changes

- Sec. 301. Strokes and heart attacks incurred or aggravated by members of reserve components in the performance of duty while performing inactive duty training to be considered to be service-connected.
- Sec. 302. Special monthly compensation for women veterans who lose a breast as a result of a service-connected disability.
- Sec. 303. Benefits for persons disabled by participation in compensated work therapy program.
- Sec. 304. Revision to limitation on payments of benefits to incompetent institutionalized veterans.
- Sec. 305. Review of dose reconstruction program of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Subtitle B—Life Insurance Matters

- Sec. 311. Premiums for term Service Disabled Veterans' Insurance for veterans older than age 70.
- Sec. 312. Increase in automatic maximum coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance and Veterans' Group Life Insurance.
- Sec. 313. Eligibility of certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

Subtitle C—Housing and Employment Programs

- Sec. 321. Elimination of reduction in assistance for specially adapted housing for disabled veterans for veterans having joint ownership of housing units.
- Sec. 322. Veterans employment emphasis under Federal contracts for recently separated veterans.
- Sec. 323. Employers required to grant leave of absence for employees to participate in honor guards for funerals of veterans.

Subtitle D—Cemeteries and Memorial Affairs

- Sec. 331. Eligibility for interment of certain Filipino veterans of World War II in national cemeteries.
 Sec. 332. Payment rate of certain burial benefits for certain Filipino veterans of World War II.
 Sec. 333. Plot allowance for burial in State veterans cemeteries.

TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS

- Sec. 401. Benefits for the children of women Vietnam veterans who suffer from certain birth defects.
 Sec. 402. Extension of certain expiring authorities.
 Sec. 403. Preservation of certain reporting requirements.
 Sec. 404. Technical amendments.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

TITLE I—EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Montgomery GI Bill Educational Assistance

SEC. 101. INCREASE IN RATES OF BASIC EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER MONTGOMERY GI BILL.

(a) **ACTIVE DUTY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.**—Section 3015 is amended—

- (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “\$528” and inserting “\$650”; and
 (2) in subsection (b)(1), by striking “\$429” and inserting “\$528”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on November 1, 2000, and shall apply with respect to educational assistance allowances paid under chapter 30 of title 38, United States Code, for months after October 2000.

SEC. 102. UNIFORM REQUIREMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENCY BEFORE APPLICATION FOR MONTGOMERY GI BILL BENEFITS.

(a) **ACTIVE DUTY PROGRAM.**—(1) Section 3011 is amended—
 (A) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following new paragraph (2):

“(2) who completes the requirements of a secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate), or successfully completes (or otherwise receives academic credit for) the equivalent of 12 semester hours in a program of education leading to a standard college degree, before applying for benefits under this section; and”;

(B) by striking subsection (e).

(2) Section 3017(a)(1)(A)(ii) is amended by striking “clause (2)(A)” and inserting “clause (2)”.

(b) **SELECTED RESERVE PROGRAM.**—Section 3012 is amended—
 (1) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following new paragraph (2):

“(2) who completes the requirements of a secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate), or successfully completes (or otherwise receives academic credit for) the equivalent of 12 semester hours in a program of education leading to a standard college degree, before applying for benefits under this section; and”; and

(2) by striking subsection (f).

(c) **WITHDRAWAL OF ELECTION NOT TO ENROLL.**—Paragraph (4) of section 3018(b) is amended to read as follows:

“(4) before applying for benefits under this section—

“(A) completes the requirements of a secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate); or

“(B) successfully completes (or otherwise receives academic credit for) the equivalent of 12 semester hours in a program of education leading to a standard college degree; and”.

(d) **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS OF SELECTED RESERVE.**—Paragraph (2) of section 16132(a) of title 10, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(2) before applying for benefits under this section, has completed the requirements of a secondary school diploma (or an equivalency certificate);”.

(e) **DELIMITING PERIOD.**—(1) In the case of an individual described in paragraph (2), with respect to the time limitation under section 3031 of title 38, United States Code, for use of eligibility and entitlement of basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of such title, the 10-year period applicable under such section shall begin on the later of—

(A) the date of the enactment of this Act; or

(B) the date of the individual's last discharge or release from active duty.

(2) An individual referred to in paragraph (1) is an individual who—

(A) before the date of the enactment of this Act, was not eligible for such basic educational assistance by reason of the requirement of a secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate) as a condition of eligibility for such assistance as in effect on the date preceding the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(B) becomes entitled to basic educational assistance under section 3011(a)(2), 3012(a)(2), or 3018(b)(4) of title 38, United States Code, by reason of the amendments made by this section.

SEC. 103. REPEAL OF REQUIREMENT FOR INITIAL OBLIGATED PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY AS CONDITION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR MONTGOMERY GI BILL BENEFITS.

(a) **ACTIVE DUTY PROGRAM.**—Section 3011 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)(A)—

(A) by striking clause (i) and inserting the following new clause (i):

“(i) who serves an obligated period of active duty of at least two years of continuous active duty in the Armed Forces; or”; and

(B) in clause (ii)(II), by striking “in the case of an individual who completed not less than 20 months” and all that follows through “was at least three years” and inserting “if, in the case of an individual with an obligated

38 USC 3031
note.

period of service of two years, the individual completes not less than 20 months of continuous active duty under that period of obligated service, or, in the case of an individual with an obligated period of service of at least three years, the individual completes not less than 30 months of continuous active duty under that period of obligated service”;

(2) in subsection (d)(1), by striking “individual’s initial obligated period of active duty” and inserting “obligated period of active duty on which an individual’s entitlement to assistance under this section is based”;

(3) in subsection (h)(2)(A), by striking “during an initial period of active duty,” and inserting “during the obligated period of active duty on which entitlement to assistance under this section is based,”; and

(4) in subsection (i), by striking “initial”.

(b) **SELECTED RESERVE PROGRAM.**—Section 3012 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)(A)(i), by striking “, as the individual’s” and all that follows through “Armed Forces” and inserting “an obligated period of active duty of at least two years of continuous active duty in the Armed Forces”; and

(2) in subsection (e)(1), by striking “initial”.

(c) **DURATION OF ASSISTANCE.**—Section 3013 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2), by striking “individual’s initial obligated period of active duty” and inserting “obligated period of active duty on which such entitlement is based”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(1), by striking “individual’s initial obligated period of active duty” and inserting “obligated period of active duty on which such entitlement is based”.

(d) **AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.**—Section 3015 is amended—

(1) in the second sentence of subsection (a), by inserting before “a basic educational assistance allowance” the following: “in the case of an individual entitled to an educational assistance allowance under this chapter whose obligated period of active duty on which such entitlement is based is three years,”;

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “and whose initial obligated period of active duty is two years,” and inserting “whose obligated period of active duty on which such entitlement is based is two years,”; and

(3) in subsection (c)(2), by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following new subparagraphs (A) and (B):

“(A) whose obligated period of active duty on which such entitlement is based is less than three years;

“(B) who, beginning on the date of the commencement of such obligated period of active duty, serves a continuous period of active duty of not less than three years; and”.

(e) **DELIMITING PERIOD.**—(1) In the case of an individual described in paragraph (2), with respect to the time limitation under section 3031 of title 38, United States Code, for use of eligibility and entitlement of basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of such title, the 10-year period applicable under such section shall begin on the later of—

(A) the date of the enactment of this Act; or

(B) the date of the individual’s last discharge or release from active duty.

(2) An individual referred to in paragraph (1) is an individual who—

(A) before the date of the enactment of this Act, was not eligible for basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of such title by reason of the requirement of an initial obligated period of active duty as condition of eligibility for such assistance as in effect on the date preceding the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(B) on or after such date becomes eligible for such assistance by reason of the amendments made by this section.

SEC. 104. ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR CERTAIN VEAP PARTICIPANTS TO ENROLL IN BASIC EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER MONTGOMERY GI BILL.

(a) SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD.—Section 3018C is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e)(1) A qualified individual (described in paragraph (2)) may make an irrevocable election under this subsection, during the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this subsection, to become entitled to basic educational assistance under this chapter. Such an election shall be made in the same manner as elections made under subsection (a)(5).

“(2) A qualified individual referred to in paragraph (1) is an individual who meets each of the following requirements:

“(A) The individual was a participant in the educational benefits program under chapter 32 of this title on or before October 9, 1996.

“(B) The individual has continuously served on active duty since October 9, 1996 (excluding the periods referred to in section 3202(1)(C) of this title), through at least April, 1, 2000.

“(C) The individual meets the requirements of subsection (a)(3).

“(D) The individual, when discharged or released from active duty, is discharged or released therefrom with an honorable discharge.

“(3)(A) Subject to the succeeding provisions of this paragraph, with respect to a qualified individual who makes an election under paragraph (1) to become entitled to basic education assistance under this chapter—

“(i) the basic pay of the qualified individual shall be reduced (in a manner determined by the Secretary concerned) until the total amount by which such basic pay is reduced is \$2,700; and

“(ii) to the extent that basic pay is not so reduced before the qualified individual's discharge or release from active duty as specified in subsection (a)(4), at the election of the qualified individual—

“(I) the Secretary concerned shall collect from the qualified individual; or

“(II) the Secretary concerned shall reduce the retired or retainer pay of the qualified individual by, an amount equal to the difference between \$2,700 and the total amount of reductions under clause (i), which shall be paid into the Treasury of the United States as miscellaneous receipts.

“(B)(i) The Secretary concerned shall provide for an 18-month period, beginning on the date the qualified individual makes an

election under paragraph (1), for the qualified individual to pay that Secretary the amount due under subparagraph (A).

“(ii) Nothing in clause (i) shall be construed as modifying the period of eligibility for and entitlement to basic education assistance under this chapter applicable under section 3031 of this title.

“(C) The provisions of subsection (c) shall apply to qualified individuals making elections under this subsection in the same manner as they applied to individuals making elections under subsection (a)(5).

“(4) With respect to qualified individuals referred to in paragraph (3)(A)(ii), no amount of educational assistance allowance under this chapter shall be paid to the qualified individual until the earlier of the date on which—

“(A) the Secretary concerned collects the applicable amount under subclause (I) of such paragraph; or

“(B) the retired or retainer pay of the qualified individual is first reduced under subclause (II) of such paragraph.

“(5) The Secretary, in conjunction with the Secretary of Defense, shall provide for notice to participants in the educational benefits program under chapter 32 of this title of the opportunity under this subsection to elect to become entitled to basic educational assistance under this chapter.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3018C(b) is amended by striking “subsection (a)” and inserting “subsection (a) or (e)”.

38 USC 3018c.

(c) COORDINATION PROVISIONS.—(1) If this Act is enacted before the provisions of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 are enacted into law, section 1601 of that Act, including the amendments made by that section, shall not take effect. If this Act is enacted after the provisions of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 are enacted into law, then as of the enactment of this Act, the amendments made by section 1601 of that Act shall be deemed for all purposes not to have taken effect and that section shall cease to be in effect.

38 USC 5107.

(2) If the Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000 is enacted before the provisions of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 are enacted into law, section 1611 of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, including the amendments made by that section, shall not take effect. If the Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000 is enacted after the provisions of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 are enacted into law, then as of the enactment of the Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000, the amendments made by section 1611 of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 shall be deemed for all purposes not to have taken effect and that section shall cease to be in effect.

SEC. 105. INCREASED ACTIVE DUTY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFIT FOR CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS.

(a) AUTHORITY TO MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR INCREASED ASSISTANCE AMOUNT.—(1) Section 3011, as amended by section 102(a)(1)(B), is amended by inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection (e):

“(e)(1) Any individual eligible for educational assistance under this section who does not make an election under subsection (c)(1) may contribute amounts for purposes of receiving an increased

amount of basic educational assistance as provided for under section 3015(g) of this title. Such contributions shall be in addition to any reductions in the basic pay of such individual under subsection (b).

“(2) An individual covered by paragraph (1) may make the contributions authorized by that paragraph at any time while on active duty.

“(3) The total amount of the contributions made by an individual under paragraph (1) may not exceed \$600. Such contributions shall be made in multiples of \$4.

“(4) Contributions under this subsection shall be made to the Secretary. The Secretary shall deposit any amounts received by the Secretary as contributions under this subsection into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.”.

(2) Section 3012, as amended by section 102(b)(2), is amended by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection (f):

“(f)(1) Any individual eligible for educational assistance under this section who does not make an election under subsection (d)(1) may contribute amounts for purposes of receiving an increased amount of basic educational assistance as provided for under section 3015(g) of this title. Such contributions shall be in addition to any reductions in the basic pay of such individual under subsection (c).

“(2) An individual covered by paragraph (1) may make the contributions authorized by that paragraph at any time while on active duty.

“(3) The total amount of the contributions made by an individual under paragraph (1) may not exceed \$600. Such contributions shall be made in multiples of \$4.

“(4) Contributions under this subsection shall be made to the Secretary. The Secretary shall deposit any amounts received by the Secretary as contributions under this subsection into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.”.

(b) INCREASED ASSISTANCE AMOUNT.—Section 3015 is amended—

(1) by striking “subsection (g)” each place it appears in subsections (a)(1) and (b)(1) and inserting “subsection (h)”;

(2) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (h); and

(3) by inserting after subsection (f) the following new subsection (g):

“(g) In the case of an individual who has made contributions authorized by section 3011(e) or 3012(f) of this title, the monthly amount of basic educational assistance allowance applicable to such individual under subsection (a), (b), or (c) shall be the monthly rate otherwise provided for under the applicable subsection increased by—

“(1) an amount equal to \$1 for each \$4 contributed by such individual under section 3011(e) or 3012(f), as the case may be, for an approved program of education pursued on a full-time basis; or

“(2) an appropriately reduced amount based on the amount so contributed, as determined under regulations which the Secretary shall prescribe, for an approved program of education pursued on less than a full-time basis.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on May 1, 2001.

38 USC 3011
note.

38 USC 3011
note.

(d) **TRANSITIONAL PROVISION FOR INDIVIDUALS DISCHARGED BETWEEN ENACTMENT AND EFFECTIVE DATE.**—(1) During the period beginning on May 1, 2001, and ending on July 31, 2001, an individual described in paragraph (2) may make contributions under section 3011(e) or 3012(f) of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)), whichever is applicable to that individual, without regard to paragraph (2) of that section and otherwise in the same manner as an individual eligible for educational assistance under chapter 30 of such title who is on active duty.

(2) Paragraph (1) applies in the case of an individual who—
(A) is discharged or released from active duty during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on April 30, 2001; and

(B) is eligible for educational assistance under chapter 30 of title 38, United States Code.

Subtitle B—Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance

SEC. 111. INCREASE IN RATES OF SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) **SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.**—Section 3532 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) by striking “\$485” and inserting “\$588”;

(B) by striking “\$365” and inserting “\$441”; and

(C) by striking “\$242” and inserting “\$294”;

(2) in subsection (a)(2), by striking “\$485” and inserting “\$588”;

(3) in subsection (b), by striking “\$485” and inserting “\$588”; and

(4) in subsection (c)(2)—

(A) by striking “\$392” and inserting “\$475”;

(B) by striking “\$294” and inserting “\$356”; and

(C) by striking “\$196” and inserting “\$238”.

(b) **CORRESPONDENCE COURSE.**—Section 3534(b) is amended by striking “\$485” and inserting “\$588”.

(c) **SPECIAL RESTORATIVE TRAINING.**—Section 3542(a) is amended—

(1) by striking “\$485” and inserting “\$588”;

(2) by striking “\$152” each place it appears and inserting “\$184”; and

(3) by striking “\$16.16” and all that follows and inserting “such increased amount of allowance that is equal to one-thirtieth of the full-time basic monthly rate of special training allowance.”.

(d) **APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING.**—Section 3687(b)(2) is amended—

(1) by striking “\$353” and inserting “\$428”;

(2) by striking “\$264” and inserting “\$320”;

(3) by striking “\$175” and inserting “\$212”; and

(4) by striking “\$88” and inserting “\$107”.

(e) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsections (a) through (d) shall take effect on November 1, 2000, and shall apply with respect to educational assistance allowances paid under

38 USC 3532
note.

chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, for months after October 2000.

(f) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS TO AMOUNTS OF ASSISTANCE.—

(1) CHAPTER 35.—(A) Subchapter VI of chapter 35 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3564. Annual adjustment of amounts of educational assistance

“With respect to any fiscal year, the Secretary shall provide a percentage increase (rounded to the nearest dollar) in the rates payable under sections 3532, 3534(b), and 3542(a) of this title equal to the percentage by which—

“(1) the Consumer Price Index (all items, United States city average) for the 12-month period ending on the June 30 preceding the beginning of the fiscal year for which the increase is made, exceeds

“(2) such Consumer Price Index for the 12-month period preceding the 12-month period described in paragraph (1).”.

(B) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 35 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3563 the following new item:

“3564. Annual adjustment of amounts of educational assistance.”.

(2) CHAPTER 36.—Section 3687 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) With respect to any fiscal year, the Secretary shall provide a percentage increase (rounded to the nearest dollar) in the rates payable under subsection (b)(2) equal to the percentage by which—

“(1) the Consumer Price Index (all items, United States city average) for the 12-month period ending on the June 30 preceding the beginning of the fiscal year for which the increase is made, exceeds

“(2) such Consumer Price Index for the 12-month period preceding the 12-month period described in paragraph (1).”.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Sections 3654 and 3687(d) of title 38, United States Code, as added by this subsection, shall take effect on October 1, 2001.

38 USC 3564
note.

SEC. 112. ELECTION OF CERTAIN RECIPIENTS OF COMMENCEMENT OF PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

Section 3512(a)(3) is amended by striking “8 years after,” and all that follows through the end and inserting “8 years after the date that is elected by that person to be the beginning date of entitlement under section 3511 of this title or subchapter V of this chapter if—

“(A) the Secretary approves that beginning date;

“(B) the eligible person makes that election after the person's eighteenth birthday but before the person's twenty-sixth birthday; and

“(C) that beginning date—

“(i) in the case of a person whose eligibility is based on a parent who has a service-connected total disability permanent in nature, is between the dates described in subsection (d); and

“(ii) in the case of a person whose eligibility is based on the death of a parent, is between—

“(I) the date of the parent's death; and

“(II) the date of the Secretary’s decision that the death was service-connected;”.

SEC. 113. ADJUSTED EFFECTIVE DATE FOR AWARD OF SURVIVORS’ AND DEPENDENTS’ EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 5113 is amended—

- (1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c);
- (2) in subsection (a), by striking “subsection (b) of this section” and inserting “subsections (b) and (c)”; and
- (3) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection:

“(b)(1) When determining the effective date of an award under chapter 35 of this title for an individual described in paragraph (2) based on an original claim, the Secretary may consider the individual’s application as having been filed on the eligibility date of the individual if that eligibility date is more than one year before the date of the initial rating decision.

“(2) An individual referred to in paragraph (1) is an eligible person who—

“(A) submits to the Secretary an original application for educational assistance under chapter 35 of this title within one year of the date that the Secretary makes the rating decision;

“(B) claims such educational assistance for pursuit of an approved program of education during a period preceding the one-year period ending on the date on which the application was received by the Secretary; and

“(C) would have been entitled to such educational assistance for such course pursuit if the individual had submitted such an application on the individual’s eligibility date.

“(3) In this subsection:

“(A) The term ‘eligibility date’ means the date on which an individual becomes an eligible person.

“(B) The term ‘eligible person’ has the meaning given that term under section 3501(a)(1) of this title under subparagraph (A)(i), (A)(ii), (B), or (D) of such section by reason of either (i) the service-connected death or (ii) service-connected total disability permanent in nature of the veteran from whom such eligibility is derived.

“(C) The term ‘initial rating decision’ means with respect to an eligible person a decision made by the Secretary that establishes (i) service connection for such veteran’s death or (ii) the existence of such veteran’s service-connected total disability permanent in nature, as the case may be.”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to applications first made under section 3513 of title 38, United States Code, that—

(1) are received on or after the date of the enactment of this Act; or

(2) on the date of the enactment of this Act, are pending (A) with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or (B) exhaustion of available administrative and judicial remedies.

SEC. 114. AVAILABILITY UNDER SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE OF PREPARATORY COURSES FOR COLLEGE AND GRADUATE SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 3501(a)(5) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Such term also includes any preparatory course described in section 3002(3)(B) of this title.”

(b) **SCOPE OF AVAILABILITY.**—Section 3512(a) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of clause (5);

(2) by striking the period at the end of clause (6) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(7) if the person is pursuing a preparatory course described in section 3002(3)(B) of this title, such period may begin on the date that is the first day of such course pursuit, notwithstanding that such date may be before the person's eighteenth birthday, except that in no case may such person be afforded educational assistance under this chapter for pursuit of secondary schooling unless such course pursuit would otherwise be authorized under this subsection.”

Subtitle C—General Educational Assistance

SEC. 121. REVISION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE INTERVAL PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subclause (C) of the third sentence of section 3680(a) is amended to read as follows:

“(C) during periods between school terms where the educational institution certifies the enrollment of the eligible veteran or eligible person on an individual term basis if (i) the period between those terms does not exceed eight weeks, and (ii) both the terms preceding and following the period are not shorter in length than the period.”

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to payments of educational assistance under title 38, United States Code, for months beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

38 USC 3680
note.

SEC. 122. AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR PAYMENT FOR LICENSING OR CERTIFICATION TESTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Sections 3452(b) and 3501(a)(5) (as amended by section 114(a)) are each amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Such term also includes licensing or certification tests, the successful completion of which demonstrates an individual's possession of the knowledge or skill required to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession, provided such tests and the licensing or credentialing organizations or entities that offer such tests are approved by the Secretary in accordance with section 3689 of this title.”

(b) **AMOUNT OF PAYMENT.**—

(1) **CHAPTER 30.**—Section 3032 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f)(1) Subject to paragraph (3), the amount of educational assistance payable under this chapter for a licensing or certification

test described in section 3452(b) of this title is the lesser of \$2,000 or the fee charged for the test.

“(2) The number of months of entitlement charged in the case of any individual for such licensing or certification test is equal to the number (including any fraction) determined by dividing the total amount of educational assistance paid such individual for such test by the full-time monthly institutional rate of educational assistance which, except for paragraph (1), such individual would otherwise be paid under subsection (a)(1), (b)(1), (d), or (e)(1) of section 3015 of this title, as the case may be.

“(3) In no event shall payment of educational assistance under this subsection for such a test exceed the amount of the individual's available entitlement under this chapter.”

(2) CHAPTER 32.—Section 3232 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c)(1) Subject to paragraph (3), the amount of educational assistance payable under this chapter for a licensing or certification test described in section 3452(b) of this title is the lesser of \$2,000 or the fee charged for the test.

“(2) The number of months of entitlement charged in the case of any individual for such licensing or certification test is equal to the number (including any fraction) determined by dividing the total amount paid to such individual for such test by the full-time monthly institutional rate of the educational assistance allowance which, except for paragraph (1), such individual would otherwise be paid under this chapter.

“(3) In no event shall payment of educational assistance under this subsection for such a test exceed the amount of the individual's available entitlement under this chapter.”

(3) CHAPTER 34.—Section 3482 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h)(1) Subject to paragraph (3), the amount of educational assistance payable under this chapter for a licensing or certification test described in section 3452(b) of this title is the lesser of \$2,000 or the fee charged for the test.

“(2) The number of months of entitlement charged in the case of any individual for such licensing or certification test is equal to the number (including any fraction) determined by dividing the total amount paid to such individual for such test by the full-time monthly institutional rate of the educational assistance allowance which, except for paragraph (1), such individual would otherwise be paid under this chapter.

“(3) In no event shall payment of educational assistance under this subsection for such a test exceed the amount of the individual's available entitlement under this chapter.”

(4) CHAPTER 35.—Section 3532 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f)(1) Subject to paragraph (3), the amount of educational assistance payable under this chapter for a licensing or certification test described in section 3501(a)(5) of this title is the lesser of \$2,000 or the fee charged for the test.

“(2) The number of months of entitlement charged in the case of any individual for such licensing or certification test is equal to the number (including any fraction) determined by dividing the total amount paid to such individual for such test by the full-

time monthly institutional rate of the educational assistance allowance which, except for paragraph (1), such individual would otherwise be paid under this chapter.

“(3) In no event shall payment of educational assistance under this subsection for such a test exceed the amount of the individual’s available entitlement under this chapter.”.

(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSING AND CREDENTIALING TESTING.—(1) Chapter 36 is amended by inserting after section 3688 the following new section:

“§ 3689. Approval requirements for licensing and certification testing

“(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) No payment may be made for a licensing or certification test described in section 3452(b) or 3501(a)(5) of this title unless the Secretary determines that the requirements of this section have been met with respect to such test and the organization or entity offering the test. The requirements of approval for tests and organizations or entities offering tests shall be in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and chapters 30, 32, 34, and 35 of this title and with regulations prescribed by the Secretary to carry out this section.

“(2) To the extent that the Secretary determines practicable, State approving agencies may, in lieu of the Secretary, approve licensing and certification tests, and organizations and entities offering such tests, under this section.

“(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR TESTS.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), a licensing or certification test is approved for purposes of this section only if—

“(A) the test is required under Federal, State, or local law or regulation for an individual to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession; or

“(B) the Secretary determines that the test is generally accepted, in accordance with relevant government, business, or industry standards, employment policies, or hiring practices, as attesting to a level of knowledge or skill required to qualify to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession.

“(2) A licensing or certification test offered by a State, or a political subdivision of a State, is deemed approved by the Secretary for purposes of this section.

“(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS OR ENTITIES OFFERING TESTS.—(1) Each organization or entity that is not an entity of the United States, a State, or political subdivision of a State, that offers a licensing or certification test for which payment may be made under chapter 30, 32, 34, or 35 of this title and that meets the following requirements, shall be approved by the Secretary to offer such test:

“(A) The organization or entity certifies to the Secretary that the licensing or certification test offered by the organization or entity is generally accepted, in accordance with relevant government, business, or industry standards, employment policies, or hiring practices, as attesting to a level of knowledge or skill required to qualify to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession.

“(B) The organization or entity is licensed, chartered, or incorporated in a State and has offered the test for a minimum of two years before the date on which the organization or entity first submits to the Secretary an application for approval under this section.

“(C) The organization or entity employs, or consults with, individuals with expertise or substantial experience with respect to all areas of knowledge or skill that are measured by the test and that are required for the license or certificate issued.

“(D) The organization or entity has no direct financial interest in—

“(i) the outcome of the test; or

“(ii) organizations that provide the education or training of candidates for licenses or certificates required for vocations or professions.

“(E) The organization or entity maintains appropriate records with respect to all candidates who take the test for a period prescribed by the Secretary, but in no case for a period of less than three years.

“(F)(i) The organization or entity promptly issues notice of the results of the test to the candidate for the license or certificate.

“(ii) The organization or entity has in place a process to review complaints submitted against the organization or entity with respect to the test or the process for obtaining a license or certificate required for vocations or professions.

“(G) The organization or entity furnishes to the Secretary such information with respect to the test as the Secretary requires to determine whether payment may be made for the test under chapter 30, 32, 34, or 35 of this title, including personal identifying information, fee payment, and test results. Such information shall be furnished in the form prescribed by the Secretary.

“(H) The organization or entity furnishes to the Secretary the following information:

“(i) A description of the licensing or certification test offered by the organization or entity, including the purpose of the test, the vocational, professional, governmental, and other entities that recognize the test, and the license or certificate issued upon successful completion of the test.

“(ii) The requirements to take the test, including the amount of the fee charged for the test and any prerequisite education, training, skills, or other certification.

“(iii) The period for which the license or certificate awarded upon successful completion of the test is valid, and the requirements for maintaining or renewing the license or certificate.

“(I) Upon request of the Secretary, the organization or entity furnishes such information to the Secretary that the Secretary determines necessary to perform an assessment of—

“(i) the test conducted by the organization or entity as compared to the level of knowledge or skills that a license or certificate attests; and

“(ii) the applicability of the test over such periods of time as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(2) With respect to each organization or entity that is an entity of the United States, a State, or political subdivision of a State, that offers a licensing or certification test for which payment may be made under chapters 30, 32, 34, or 35 of this title, the following provisions of paragraph (1) shall apply to the entity: subparagraphs (E), (F), (G), and (H).

“(d) ADMINISTRATION.—Except as otherwise specifically provided in this section or chapter 30, 32, 34, or 35 of this title, in implementing this section and making payment under any such chapter for a licensing or certification test, the test is deemed to be a ‘course’ and the organization or entity that offers such test is deemed to be an ‘institution’ or ‘educational institution’, respectively, as those terms are applied under and for purposes of sections 3671, 3673, 3674, 3678, 3679, 3681, 3682, 3683, 3685, 3690, and 3696 of this title.

“(e) PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—(1) There is established within the Department a committee to be known as the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee (hereinafter in this section referred to as the ‘Committee’).

“(2) The Committee shall advise the Secretary with respect to the requirements of organizations or entities offering licensing and certification tests to individuals for which payment for such tests may be made under chapter 30, 32, 34, or 35 of this title, and such other related issues as the Committee determines to be appropriate.

“(3)(A) The Secretary shall appoint seven individuals with expertise in matters relating to licensing and certification tests to serve as members of the Committee.

“(B) The Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Defense shall serve as ex officio members of the Committee.

“(C) A vacancy in the Committee shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

“(4)(A) The Secretary shall appoint the chairman of the Committee.

“(B) The Committee shall meet at the call of the chairman.

“(5) The Committee shall terminate December 31, 2006.”

(2) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 36 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3688 the following new item:

“3689. Approval requirements for licensing and certification testing.”

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on March 1, 2001, and shall apply with respect to licensing and certification tests approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on or after such date.

(e) STARTUP FUNDING.—From amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2001 for readjustment benefits, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall use an amount not to exceed \$3,000,000 to develop the systems and procedures required to make payments under chapters 30, 32, 34, and 35 of title 38, United States Code, for licensing and certification tests.

SEC. 123. INCREASE FOR FISCAL YEARS 2001 AND 2002 IN AGGREGATE ANNUAL AMOUNT AVAILABLE FOR STATE APPROVING AGENCIES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.

Section 3674(a)(4) is amended—

38 USC 3032
note.

- (1) in the first sentence, by inserting “or, for each of fiscal years 2001 and 2002, \$14,000,000” after “\$13,000,000”; and
- (2) in the second sentence, by striking “\$13,000,000” both places it appears and inserting “the amount applicable to that fiscal year under the preceding sentence”.

TITLE II—HEALTH PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Personnel Matters

SEC. 201. ANNUAL NATIONAL PAY COMPARABILITY ADJUSTMENT FOR NURSES EMPLOYED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) REVISED PAY ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES.—(1) Subsection (d) of section 7451 is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “The rates” and inserting “Subject to subsection (e), the rates”; and

(ii) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking “section 5305” and inserting “section 5303”; and

(II) by inserting “and to be by the same percentage” after “to have the same effective date”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “Such” in the second sentence and inserting “Except as provided in paragraph (1)(A), such”;

(C) in paragraph (3)(B)—

(i) by inserting after the first sentence the following new sentence: “To the extent practicable, the director shall use third-party industry wage surveys to meet the requirements of the preceding sentence.”;

(ii) by inserting before the penultimate sentence the following new sentence: “To the extent practicable, all surveys conducted pursuant to this subparagraph or subparagraph (A) shall include the collection of salary midpoints, actual salaries, lowest and highest salaries, average salaries, bonuses, incentive pays, differential pays, actual beginning rates of pay, and such other information needed to meet the purpose of this section.”; and

(iii) in the penultimate sentence, by inserting “or published” after “completed”; and

(D) by striking clause (iii) of paragraph (3)(C).

(2) Subsection (e) of such section is amended to read as follows:

“(e)(1) An adjustment in a rate of basic pay under subsection (d) may not reduce the rate of basic pay applicable to any grade of a covered position.

“(2) The director of a Department health-care facility, in determining whether to carry out a wage survey under subsection (d)(3) with respect to rates of basic pay for a grade of a covered position, may not consider as a factor in such determination the absence of a current recruitment or retention problem for personnel in that grade of that position. The director shall make such a determination based upon whether, in accordance with criteria established by the Secretary, there is a significant pay-related staffing problem at that facility in any grade for a position. If the director determines that there is such a problem, or that such a problem

is likely to exist in the near future, the Director shall provide for a wage survey in accordance with subsection (d)(3).

“(3) The Under Secretary for Health may, to the extent necessary to carry out the purposes of subsection (d), modify any determination made by the director of a Department health-care facility with respect to adjusting the rates of basic pay applicable to covered positions. If the determination of the director would result in an adjustment in rates of basic pay applicable to covered positions, any action by the Under Secretary under the preceding sentence shall be made before the effective date of such pay adjustment. Upon such action by the Under Secretary, any adjustment shall take effect on the first day of the first pay period beginning after such action. The Secretary shall ensure that the Under Secretary establishes a mechanism for the timely exercise of the authority in this paragraph.

“(4) Each director of a Department health-care facility shall provide to the Secretary, not later than July 31 each year, a report on staffing for covered positions at that facility. The report shall include the following:

“(A) Information on turnover rates and vacancy rates for each grade in a covered position, including a comparison of those rates with the rates for the preceding three years.

“(B) The director’s findings concerning the review and evaluation of the facility’s staffing situation, including whether there is, or is likely to be, in accordance with criteria established by the Secretary, a significant pay-related staffing problem at that facility for any grade of a covered position and, if so, whether a wage survey was conducted, or will be conducted with respect to that grade.

“(C) In any case in which the director conducts such a wage survey during the period covered by the report, information describing the survey and any actions taken or not taken based on the survey, and the reasons for taking (or not taking) such actions.

“(D) In any case in which the director, after finding that there is, or is likely to be, in accordance with criteria established by the Secretary, a significant pay-related staffing problem at that facility for any grade of a covered position, determines not to conduct a wage survey with respect to that position, a statement of the reasons why the director did not conduct such a survey.

“(5) Not later than September 30 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on staffing for covered positions at Department health care facilities. Each such report shall include the following: Deadline.

“(A) A summary and analysis of the information contained in the most recent reports submitted by facility directors under paragraph (4).

“(B) The information for each such facility specified in paragraph (4).”

(3) Subsection (f) of such section is amended—

(A) by striking “February 1 of 1991, 1992, and 1993” and inserting “March 1 of each year”; and

(B) by striking “subsection (d)(1)(A)” and inserting “subsection (d)”.

(4) Such section is further amended by striking subsection (g) and redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (g).

(b) **REQUIRED CONSULTATIONS WITH NURSES.**—(1) Subchapter II of chapter 73 is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 7323. Required consultations with nurses

“The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that—

“(1) the director of a geographic service area, in formulating policy relating to the provision of patient care, shall consult regularly with a senior nurse executive or senior nurse executives; and

“(2) the director of a medical center shall include a registered nurse as a member of any committee used at that medical center to provide recommendations or decisions on medical center operations or policy affecting clinical services, clinical outcomes, budget, or resources.”.

(2) The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7322 the following new item:

“7323. Required consultations with nurses.”.

SEC. 202. SPECIAL PAY FOR DENTISTS.

(a) **FULL-TIME STATUS PAY.**—Paragraph (1) of section 7435(b) is amended by striking “\$3,500” and inserting “\$9,000”.

(b) **TENURE PAY.**—The table in paragraph (2)(A) of that section is amended to read as follows:

| “Length of Service | Rate | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| | Minimum | Maximum |
| 1 year but less than 2 years | \$1,000 | \$2,000 |
| 2 years but less than 4 years | 4,000 | 5,000 |
| 4 years but less than 8 years | 5,000 | 8,000 |
| 8 years but less than 12 years | 8,000 | 12,000 |
| 12 years but less than 20 years | 12,000 | 15,000 |
| 20 years or more | 15,000 | 18,000.”. |

(c) **SCARCE SPECIALTY PAY.**—Paragraph (3)(A) of that section is amended by striking “\$20,000” and inserting “\$30,000”.

(d) **RESPONSIBILITY PAY.**—(1) The table in paragraph (4)(A) of that section is amended to read as follows:

| “Position | Rate | |
|--|----------|-----------|
| | Minimum | Maximum |
| Chief of Staff or in an Executive Grade | \$14,500 | \$25,000 |
| Director Grade | 0 | 25,000 |
| Service Chief (or in a comparable position as determined by the Secretary) | 4,500 | 15,000.”. |

(2) The table in paragraph (4)(B) of that section is amended to read as follows:

| "Position" | Rate |
|---|----------|
| Deputy Service Director | \$20,000 |
| Service Director | 25,000 |
| Deputy Assistant Under Secretary for Health | 27,500 |
| Assistant Under Secretary for Health (or in a comparable position as determined by the Secretary) | 30,000." |

(e) GEOGRAPHIC PAY.—Paragraph (6) of that section is amended by striking "\$5,000" and inserting "\$12,000".

(f) SPECIAL PAY FOR POST-GRADUATE TRAINING.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(8) For a dentist who has successfully completed a post-graduate year of hospital-based training in a program accredited by the American Dental Association, an annual rate of \$2,000 for each of the first two years of service after successful completion of that training."

(g) CREDITING OF INCREASED TENURE PAY FOR CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT.—Section 7438(b) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph (5):

"(5) Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) and (2), a dentist employed as a dentist in the Veterans Health Administration on the date of the enactment of the Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 shall be entitled to have special pay paid to the dentist under section 7435(b)(2)(A) of this title (referred to as 'tenure pay') considered basic pay for the purposes of chapter 83 or 84, as appropriate, of title 5 only as follows:

"(A) In an amount equal to the amount that would have been so considered under such section on the day before such date based on the rates of special pay the dentist was entitled to receive under that section on the day before such date.

"(B) With respect to any amount of special pay received under that section in excess of the amount such dentist was entitled to receive under such section on the day before such date, in an amount equal to 25 percent of such excess amount for each two years that the physician or dentist has completed as a physician or dentist in the Veterans Health Administration after such date."

(h) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to agreements entered into by dentists under subchapter III of chapter 74 of title 38, United States Code, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

38 USC 7435
note.

(i) TRANSITION.—In the case of an agreement entered into by a dentist under subchapter III of chapter 74 of title 38, United States Code, before the date of the enactment of this Act that expires after that date, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the dentist concerned may agree to terminate that agreement as of the date of the enactment of this Act in order to permit a new agreement in accordance with section 7435 of such title, as amended by this section, to take effect as of that date.

38 USC 7435
note.

SEC. 203. EXEMPTION FOR PHARMACISTS FROM CEILING ON SPECIAL SALARY RATES.

Section 7455(c)(1) is amended by inserting ", pharmacists," after "anesthetists".

SEC. 204. TEMPORARY FULL-TIME APPOINTMENTS OF CERTAIN MEDICAL PERSONNEL.

(a) **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AWAITING CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.**—Paragraph (2) of section 7405(c) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) A temporary full-time appointment may not be made for a period in excess of two years in the case of a person who—

“(A) has successfully completed—

“(i) a full course of nursing in a recognized school of nursing, approved by the Secretary; or

“(ii) a full course of training for any category of personnel described in paragraph (3) of section 7401 of this title, or as a physician assistant, in a recognized education or training institution approved by the Secretary; and

“(B) is pending registration or licensure in a State or certification by a national board recognized by the Secretary.”.

(b) **MEDICAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL.**—That section is further amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph (3):

“(3)(A) Temporary full-time appointments of persons in positions referred to in subsection (a)(1)(D) shall not exceed three years.

“(B) Temporary full-time appointments under this paragraph may be renewed for one or more additional periods not in excess of three years each.”.

SEC. 205. QUALIFICATIONS OF SOCIAL WORKERS.

Section 7402(b)(9) is amended by striking “a person must” and all that follows and inserting “a person must—

“(A) hold a master’s degree in social work from a college or university approved by the Secretary; and

“(B) be licensed or certified to independently practice social work in a State, except that the Secretary may waive the requirement of licensure or certification for an individual social worker for a reasonable period of time recommended by the Under Secretary for Health.”.

SEC. 206. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT ADVISER TO UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH.

Section 7306(a) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (9) as paragraph (10); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following new paragraph (9):

“(9) The Advisor on Physician Assistants, who shall be a physician assistant with appropriate experience and who shall advise the Under Secretary for Health on all matters relating to the utilization and employment of physician assistants in the Administration.”.

SEC. 207. EXTENSION OF VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Employment Reduction Assistance Act of 1999 (title XI of Public Law 106-117; 5 U.S.C. 5597 note) is amended as follows:

(1) Section 1102(c) is amended to read as follows:

“(c) LIMITATION.—The plan under subsection (a) shall be limited to a total of 7,734 positions within the Department, allocated among the elements of the Department as follows:

“(1) The Veterans Health Administration, 6,800 positions.

“(2) The Veterans Benefits Administration, 740 positions.

“(3) Department of Veterans Affairs Staff Offices, 156 positions.

“(4) The National Cemetery Administration, 38 positions.”.

(2) Section 1105(a) is amended by striking “26 percent” and inserting “15 percent”.

(3) Section 1109(a) is amended by striking “December 31, 2000” and inserting “December 31, 2002”.

Subtitle B—Military Service Issues

SEC. 211. FINDINGS AND SENSE OF CONGRESS CONCERNING USE OF MILITARY HISTORIES OF VETERANS IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Pertinent military experiences and exposures may affect the health status of Department of Veterans Affairs patients who are veterans.

(2) The Department of Veterans Affairs has begun to implement a Veterans Health Initiative to develop systems to ensure that both patient care and medical education in the Veterans Health Administration are specific to the special needs of veterans and should be encouraged to continue these efforts.

(3) Protocols eliciting pertinent information relating to the military history of veterans may be beneficial to understanding certain conditions for which veterans may be at risk and thereby facilitate the treatment of veterans for those conditions.

(4) The Department of Veterans Affairs is in the process of developing a Computerized Patient Record System that offers the potential to aid in the care and monitoring of such conditions.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Congress—

(1) urges the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assess the feasibility and desirability of using a computer-based system to conduct clinical evaluations relevant to military experiences and exposures; and

(2) recommends that the Secretary accelerate efforts within the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that relevant military histories of veterans are included in Department medical records.

SEC. 212. STUDY OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN VIETNAM VETERANS.

38 USC 1712A
note.

(a) STUDY ON POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER.—Not later than 10 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into a contract with an appropriate entity to carry out a study on post-traumatic stress disorder.

(b) FOLLOW-UP STUDY.—The contract under subsection (a) shall provide for a follow-up study to the study conducted in accordance with section 102 of the Veterans Health Care Amendments of

1983 (Public Law 98-160). Such follow-up study shall use the data base and sample of the previous study.

(c) **INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED.**—The study conducted pursuant to this section shall be designed to yield information on—

- (1) the long-term course of post-traumatic stress disorder;
- (2) any long-term medical consequences of post-traumatic stress disorder;
- (3) whether particular subgroups of veterans are at greater risk of chronic or more severe problems with such disorder; and
- (4) the services used by veterans who have post-traumatic stress disorder and the effect of those services on the course of the disorder.

(d) **REPORT.**—The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the results of the study under this section. The report shall be submitted no later than October 1, 2004.

Subtitle C—Medical Administration

SEC. 221. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FISHER HOUSES.

(a) **AUTHORITY.**—Subchapter I of chapter 17 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

38 USC 1708.

“§ 1708. Temporary lodging

“(a) The Secretary may furnish persons described in subsection (b) with temporary lodging in a Fisher house or other appropriate facility in connection with the examination, treatment, or care of a veteran under this chapter or, as provided for under subsection (e)(5), in connection with benefits administered under this title.

“(b) Persons to whom the Secretary may provide lodging under subsection (a) are the following:

“(1) A veteran who must travel a significant distance to receive care or services under this title.

“(2) A member of the family of a veteran and others who accompany a veteran and provide the equivalent of familial support for such veteran.

“(c) In this section, the term ‘Fisher house’ means a housing facility that—

“(1) is located at, or in proximity to, a Department medical facility;

“(2) is available for residential use on a temporary basis by patients of that facility and others described in subsection (b)(2); and

“(3) is constructed by, and donated to the Secretary by, the Zachary and Elizabeth M. Fisher Armed Services Foundation.

“(d) The Secretary may establish charges for providing lodging under this section. The proceeds from such charges shall be credited to the medical care account and shall be available until expended for the purposes of providing such lodging.

“(e) The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section. Such regulations shall include provisions—

“(1) limiting the duration of lodging provided under this section;

“(2) establishing standards and criteria under which charges are established for such lodging under subsection (d);

“(3) establishing criteria for persons considered to be accompanying a veteran under subsection (b)(2);

“(4) establishing criteria for the use of the premises of temporary lodging facilities under this section; and

“(5) establishing any other limitations, conditions, and priorities that the Secretary considers appropriate with respect to lodging under this section.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1707 the following new item:

38 USC prec.
1701.

“1708. Temporary lodging.”

SEC. 222. EXCEPTION TO RECAPTURE RULE.

Section 8136 is amended—

(1) by inserting “(a)” at the beginning of the text of the section; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b) The establishment and operation by the Secretary of an outpatient clinic in facilities described in subsection (a) shall not constitute grounds entitling the United States to any recovery under that subsection.”

SEC. 223. SENSE OF CONGRESS CONCERNING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IN THE PROCUREMENT OF MEDICAL ITEMS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The procurement and distribution of medical items, including prescription drugs, is a multibillion-dollar annual business for both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) Those departments prescribe common high-use drugs to many of their 12,000,000 patients who have similar medical profiles.

(3) The health care systems of those departments should have management systems that can share and communicate clinical and management information useful for both systems.

(4) The institutional barriers separating the two departments have begun to be overcome in the area of medical supplies, in part as a response to recommendations by the General Accounting Office and the Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance.

(5) There is significant potential for improved savings and services by improving cooperation between the two departments in the procurement and management of prescription drugs, while remaining mindful that the two departments have different missions.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs should increase, to the maximum extent consistent with their respective missions, their level of cooperation in the procurement and management of prescription drugs.

SEC. 224. TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING CHANGES.

(a) **REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE CARE.**—Section 1710A(a) is amended by inserting “(subject to section 1710(a)(4) of this title)” after “Secretary” the first place it appears.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 1710(a)(4) is amended—

(1) by inserting “the requirement in section 1710A(a) of this title that the Secretary provide nursing home care,” after “medical services,”; and

(2) by striking the comma after “extended care services”.

(c) **OUTPATIENT TREATMENT.**—Section 201 of the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106-117; 113 Stat. 1561) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

38 USC 1710
note.

“(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsection (b) shall apply with respect to medical services furnished under section 1710(a) of title 38, United States Code, on or after the effective date of the regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the amounts required to be established under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1710(g) of that title, as amended by subsection (b).”.

38 USC 1710
note.

(d) **RATIFICATION.**—Any action taken by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 1710(g) of title 38, United States Code, during the period beginning on November 30, 1999, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act is hereby ratified.

Subtitle D—Construction Authorization

SEC. 231. AUTHORIZATION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS.

(a) **FISCAL YEAR 2001 PROJECTS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects, with each project to be carried out in an amount not to exceed the amount specified for that project:

(1) Construction of a 120-bed gero-psychiatric facility at the Department of Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, Menlo Park Division, California, \$26,600,000.

(2) Construction of a nursing home at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Beckley, West Virginia, \$9,500,000.

(3) Seismic corrections, clinical consolidation, and other improvements at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Long Beach, California, \$51,700,000.

(4) Construction of a utility plant and electrical vault at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Miami, Florida, \$23,600,000.

(b) **ADDITIONAL FISCAL YEAR 2000 PROJECT.**—The Secretary is authorized to carry out a project for the renovation of psychiatric nursing units at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in an amount not to exceed \$14,000,000.

SEC. 232. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the Construction, Major Projects, account—

(1) for fiscal years 2001 and 2002, a total of \$87,800,000 for the projects authorized in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 231(a);

(2) for fiscal year 2001, an additional amount of \$23,600,000 for the project authorized in paragraph (4) of that section; and

(3) for fiscal year 2002, an additional amount of \$14,500,000 for the project authorized in section 401(1) of the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106-117; 113 Stat. 1572).

(b) LIMITATION.—The projects authorized in section 231(a) may only be carried out using—

(1) funds appropriated for fiscal year 2001 or fiscal year 2002 (or, in the case of the project authorized in section 231(a)(4), for fiscal year 2001) pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (a);

(2) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2001 that remain available for obligation; and

(3) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for fiscal year 2001 or fiscal year 2002 (or, in the case of the project authorized in section 231(a)(4), for fiscal year 2001) for a category of activity not specific to a project.

(c) REVISION TO PRIOR LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding the limitation in section 403(b) of the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106-117; 113 Stat. 1573), the project referred to in subsection (a)(3) may be carried out using—

(1) funds appropriated for fiscal year 2002 pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (a)(3);

(2) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for fiscal year 2001 that remain available for obligation; and

(3) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for fiscal year 2001 or fiscal year 2002 for a category of activity not specific to a project.

Subtitle E—Real Property Matters

SEC. 241. CHANGE TO ENHANCED USE LEASE CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION PERIOD.

Paragraph (2) of section 8163(c) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) The Secretary may not enter into an enhanced use lease until the end of the 90-day period beginning on the date of the submission of notice under paragraph (1).”.

SEC. 242. RELEASE OF REVERSIONARY INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY PREVIOUSLY CONVEYED TO THE STATE OF TENNESSEE.

(a) RELEASE OF INTEREST.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall execute such legal instruments as necessary to release the reversionary interest of the United States described in subsection (b) in a certain parcel of real property conveyed to the State of Tennessee pursuant to the Act entitled “An Act authorizing the transfer of certain property of the Veterans’ Administration (in Johnson City, Tennessee) to the State of Tennessee”, approved June 6, 1953 (67 Stat. 54).

(b) SPECIFIED REVERSIONARY INTEREST.—Subsection (a) applies to the reversionary interest of the United States required under section 2 of the Act referred to in subsection (a), requiring use of the property conveyed pursuant to that Act to be primarily for training of the National Guard and for other military purposes.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 2 of such Act is repealed.

SEC. 243. DEMOLITION, ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP, AND REVERSION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER, ALLEN PARK, MICHIGAN.

(a) AUTHORITY.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into a multiyear contract with the Ford Motor Land Development Corporation (hereinafter in this section referred to as the “Corporation”) to undertake project management responsibility to—

(A) demolish the buildings and auxiliary structures comprising the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Allen Park, Michigan; and

(B) remediate the site of all hazardous material and environmental contaminants found on the site.

(2) The contract under paragraph (1) may be entered into notwithstanding sections 303 and 304 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (41 U.S.C. 253, 254). The contract shall be for a period specified in the contract not to exceed seven years.

(b) CONTRACT COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDING.—(1) The Secretary may expend no more than \$14,000,000 for the contract required by subsection (a). The contract shall provide that all costs for the demolition and site remediation under the contract in excess of \$14,000,000 shall be borne by the Corporation.

(2) Payments by the Secretary under the contract shall be made in annual increments of no more than \$2,000,000, beginning with fiscal year 2001, for the duration of the contract. Such payments shall be made from the nonrecurring maintenance portion of the annual Department of Veterans Affairs medical care appropriation.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the amount obligated upon the award of the contract may not exceed \$2,000,000 and the amount obligated with respect to any succeeding fiscal year may not exceed \$2,000,000. Any funds obligated for the contract shall be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

(c) REVERSION OF PROPERTY.—Upon completion of the demolition and remediation project under the contract to the satisfaction of the Secretary, the Secretary shall, on behalf of the United States, formally abandon the Allen Park property (title to which will then revert in accordance with the terms of the 1937 deed conveying such property to the United States).

(d) FLAGPOLE AND MEMORIAL.—The contract under subsection (a) shall require that the Corporation shall erect and maintain on the property abandoned by the United States under subsection (a) a flagpole and suitable memorial identifying the property as the location of the former Allen Park Medical Center. The Secretary and the Corporation shall jointly determine the placement of the memorial and flagpole and the form of, and appropriate inscription on, the memorial.

(e) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may require such additional terms and conditions with regard to the

contract with the Corporation under subsection (a) and with the reversion of the property under subsection (c) as the Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interest of the United States.

SEC. 244. CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PROPERTY AT THE CARL VINSON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER, DUBLIN, GEORGIA.

(a) **CONVEYANCE TO STATE BOARD OF REGENTS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall convey, without consideration, to the Board of Regents of the State of Georgia all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to two tracts of real property, including any improvements thereon, at the Carl Vinson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Dublin, Georgia, consisting of 39 acres, more or less, in Laurens County, Georgia.

(b) **CONVEYANCE TO COMMUNITY SERVICE BOARD OF MIDDLE GEORGIA.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall convey, without consideration, to the Community Service Board of Middle Georgia all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to three tracts of real property, including any improvements thereon, at the Carl Vinson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Dublin, Georgia, consisting of 58 acres, more or less, in Laurens County, Georgia.

(c) **CONDITIONS ON CONVEYANCE.**—The conveyance under subsection (a) shall be subject to the condition that the real property conveyed under that subsection be used in perpetuity solely for education purposes. The conveyance under subsection (b) shall be subject to the condition that the real property conveyed under that subsection be used in perpetuity solely for education and health care purposes.

(d) **SURVEY.**—The exact acreage and legal description of the real property to be conveyed under this section shall be determined by a survey or surveys satisfactory to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The cost of any such survey shall not be borne by the Secretary.

(e) **ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may require such additional terms and conditions in connection with the conveyances under this section as the Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

SEC. 245. LAND CONVEYANCE, MILES CITY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER COMPLEX, MILES CITY, MONTANA.

(a) **CONVEYANCE REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall convey, without consideration, to Custer County, Montana (in this section referred to as the “County”), all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the parcels of real property consisting of the Miles City Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center complex, which has served as a medical and support complex for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Miles City, Montana.

(b) **TIMING OF CONVEYANCE.**—The conveyance required by subsection (a) shall be made as soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) **CONDITIONS OF CONVEYANCE.**—The conveyance required by subsection (a) shall be subject to the condition that the County—

(1) use the parcels conveyed, whether directly or through an agreement with a public or private entity, for veterans

activities, community and economic development, or such other public purposes as the County considers appropriate; or

(2) convey the parcels to an appropriate public or private entity for use for the purposes specified in paragraph (1).

(d) CONVEYANCE OF IMPROVEMENTS.—(1) As part of the conveyance required by subsection (a), the Secretary may also convey to the County any improvements, equipment, fixtures, and other personal property located on the parcels conveyed under that subsection that are not required by the Secretary.

(2) Any conveyance under this subsection shall be without consideration.

(e) USE PENDING CONVEYANCE.—Until such time as the real property to be conveyed under subsection (a) is conveyed by deed under this section, the Secretary may continue to lease the real property, together with any improvements thereon, under the terms and conditions of the current lease of the real property.

(f) MAINTENANCE PENDING CONVEYANCE.—The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the real property to be conveyed under subsection (a), and any improvements, equipment, fixtures, and other personal property to be conveyed under subsection (d), in its condition as of the date of the enactment of this Act until such time as the real property, and such improvements, equipment, fixtures, and other personal property are conveyed by deed under this section.

(g) LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—The exact acreage and legal description of the real property to be conveyed under subsection (a) shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Secretary.

(h) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may require such additional terms and conditions in connection with the conveyance under this section as the Secretary determines appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

SEC. 246. CONVEYANCE OF FORT LYON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER, COLORADO, TO THE STATE OF COLORADO.

(a) CONVEYANCE AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may convey, without consideration, to the State of Colorado all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to a parcel of real property, including improvements thereon, consisting of approximately 512 acres and comprising the Fort Lyon Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The purpose of the conveyance is to permit the State of Colorado to use the property for purposes of a correctional facility.

(b) PUBLIC ACCESS.—(1) The Secretary may not make the conveyance of real property authorized by subsection (a) unless the State of Colorado agrees to provide appropriate public access to Kit Carson Chapel (located on that real property) and the cemetery located adjacent to that real property.

(2) The State of Colorado may satisfy the condition specified in paragraph (1) with respect to Kit Carson Chapel by relocating the chapel to Fort Lyon National Cemetery, Colorado, or another appropriate location approved by the Secretary.

(c) PLAN REGARDING CONVEYANCE.—(1) The Secretary may not make the conveyance authorized by subsection (a) before the date on which the Secretary implements a plan providing the following:

(A) Notwithstanding sections 1720(a)(3) and 1741 of title 38, United States Code, that veterans who are receiving

inpatient or institutional long-term care at Fort Lyon Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center as of the date of the enactment of this Act are provided appropriate inpatient or institutional long-term care under the same terms and conditions as such veterans are receiving inpatient or institutional long-term care as of that date.

(B) That the conveyance of the Fort Lyon Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center does not result in a reduction of health care services available to veterans in the catchment area of the Medical Center.

(C) Improvements in veterans' overall access to health care in the catchment area through, for example, the opening of additional outpatient clinics.

(2) The Secretary shall prepare the plan referred to in paragraph (1) in consultation with appropriate representatives of veterans service organizations and other appropriate organizations.

(3) The Secretary shall publish a copy of the plan referred to in paragraph (1) before implementation of the plan.

Publication.

(d) ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION.—The Secretary may not make the conveyance authorized by subsection (a) until the Secretary completes the evaluation and performance of any environmental restoration activities required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.), and by any other provision of law.

(e) PERSONAL PROPERTY.—As part of the conveyance authorized by subsection (a), the Secretary may convey, without consideration, to the State of Colorado any furniture, fixtures, equipment, and other personal property associated with the property conveyed under that subsection that the Secretary determines is not required for purposes of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care facilities to be established by the Secretary in southern Colorado or for purposes of Fort Lyon National Cemetery.

(f) LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—The exact acreage and legal description of the real property to be conveyed under subsection (a) shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Secretary. Any costs associated with the survey shall be borne by the State of Colorado.

(g) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may require such other terms and conditions in connection with the conveyances authorized by subsections (a) and (e) as the Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

SEC. 247. EFFECT OF CLOSURE OF FORT LYON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER ON ADMINISTRATION OF HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS.

(a) PAYMENT FOR NURSING HOME CARE.—Notwithstanding any limitation under section 1720 or 1741 of title 38, United States Code, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may pay the State of Colorado, or any private nursing home care facility, for costs incurred in providing nursing home care to any veteran who is relocated from the Fort Lyon Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Colorado, to a facility of the State of Colorado or such private facility, as the case may be, as a result of the closure of the Fort Lyon Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

(b) OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE EXTENDED CARE SERVICES.—Nothing in section 246 or this section may be construed to alter or otherwise affect the obligation of the Secretary to meet the requirements of section 1710B(b) of title 38, United States Code,

relating to staffing and levels of extended care services in fiscal years after fiscal year 1998.

(c) **REPORT ON VETERANS HEALTH CARE IN SOUTHERN COLORADO.**—Not later than one year after the conveyance, if any, authorized by section 246, the Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Director of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 19, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the status of the health care system for veterans under that Network in southern Colorado. The report shall describe any improvements to the system in southern Colorado that have been put into effect in the period beginning on the date of the conveyance and ending on the date of the report.

TITLE III—COMPENSATION, INSURANCE, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—Compensation Program Changes

SEC. 301. STROKES AND HEART ATTACKS INCURRED OR AGGRAVATED BY MEMBERS OF RESERVE COMPONENTS IN THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTY WHILE PERFORMING INACTIVE DUTY TRAINING TO BE CONSIDERED TO BE SERVICE-CONNECTED.

(a) **SCOPE OF TERM “ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, OR AIR SERVICE”.**—Section 101(24) is amended to read as follows:

“(24) The term ‘active military, naval, or air service’ includes—

“(A) active duty;

“(B) any period of active duty for training during which the individual concerned was disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty; and

“(C) any period of inactive duty training during which the individual concerned was disabled or died—

“(i) from an injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty; or

“(ii) from an acute myocardial infarction, a cardiac arrest, or a cerebrovascular accident occurring during such training.”

(b) **TRAVEL TO OR FROM TRAINING DUTY.**—Section 106(d) is amended—

(1) by inserting “(1)” after “(d)”;

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

(3) by inserting “or covered disease” after “injury” each place it appears;

(4) by designating the second sentence as paragraph (2);

(5) by designating the third sentence as paragraph (3);

and

(6) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘covered disease’ means any of the following:

“(A) Acute myocardial infarction.

“(B) A cardiac arrest.

“(C) A cerebrovascular accident.”.

SEC. 302. SPECIAL MONTHLY COMPENSATION FOR WOMEN VETERANS WHO LOSE A BREAST AS A RESULT OF A SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY.

Section 1114(k) is amended—

(1) by striking “or has suffered” and inserting “has suffered”; and

(2) by inserting after “air and bone conduction,” the following: “or, in the case of a woman veteran, has suffered the anatomical loss of one or both breasts (including loss by mastectomy).”.

SEC. 303. BENEFITS FOR PERSONS DISABLED BY PARTICIPATION IN COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY PROGRAM.

Section 1151(a)(2) is amended—

(1) by inserting “(A)” after “proximately caused”; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, or (B) by participation in a program (known as a ‘compensated work therapy program’) under section 1718 of this title”.

SEC. 304. REVISION TO LIMITATION ON PAYMENTS OF BENEFITS TO INCOMPETENT INSTITUTIONALIZED VETERANS.

Section 5503(b)(1) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking “\$1,500” and inserting “the amount equal to five times the section 1114(j) rate”; and

(B) by striking “\$500” and inserting “one-half that amount”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) For purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘section 1114(j) rate’ means the monthly rate of compensation in effect under section 1114(j) of this title for a veteran with a service-connected disability rated as total.”.

SEC. 305. REVIEW OF DOSE RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM OF THE DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY.

38 USC 1154
note.

(a) **REVIEW BY NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.**—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall enter into a contract with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out periodic reviews of the program of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency of the Department of Defense known as the “dose reconstruction program”.

(b) **REVIEW ACTIVITIES.**—The periodic reviews of the dose reconstruction program under the contract under subsection (a) shall consist of the periodic selection of random samples of doses reconstructed by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency in order to determine—

(1) whether or not the reconstruction of the sampled doses is accurate;

(2) whether or not the reconstructed dosage number is accurately reported;

(3) whether or not the assumptions made regarding radiation exposure based upon the sampled doses are credible; and

(4) whether or not the data from nuclear tests used by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency as part of the reconstruction of the sampled doses is accurate.

(c) DURATION OF REVIEW.—The periodic reviews under the contract under subsection (a) shall occur over a period of 24 months.

Deadline.

(d) REPORT.—(1) Not later than 60 days after the conclusion of the period referred to in subsection (c), the National Academy of Sciences shall submit to Congress a report on its activities under the contract under this section.

(2) The report shall include the following:

(A) A detailed description of the activities of the National Academy of Sciences under the contract.

(B) Any recommendations that the National Academy of Sciences considers appropriate regarding a permanent system of review of the dose reconstruction program of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Subtitle B—Life Insurance Matters

SEC. 311. PREMIUMS FOR TERM SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS' INSURANCE FOR VETERANS OLDER THAN AGE 70.

(a) CAP ON PREMIUMS.—Section 1922 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) The premium rate of any term insurance issued under this section shall not exceed the renewal age 70 premium rate.”.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than September 30, 2001, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report setting forth a plan to liquidate the unfunded liability under the life insurance program under section 1922 of title 38, United States Code, not later than October 1, 2011.

SEC. 312. INCREASE IN AUTOMATIC MAXIMUM COVERAGE UNDER SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE AND VETERANS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE.

(a) MAXIMUM UNDER SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE.—Section 1967 is amended in subsections (a), (c), and (d) by striking “\$200,000” each place it appears and inserting “\$250,000”.

(b) MAXIMUM UNDER VETERANS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE.—Section 1977(a) is amended by striking “\$200,000” each place it appears and inserting “\$250,000”.

38 USC 1967
note.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the first day of the first month that begins more than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 313. ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE FOR SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE.

(a) ELIGIBILITY.—Section 1965(5) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (B);

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following new subparagraph (C):

“(C) a person who volunteers for assignment to a mobilization category in the Individual Ready Reserve, as defined in section 12304(i)(1) of title 10; and”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Sections 1967(a), 1968(a), and 1969(a)(2)(A) are amended by striking “section 1965(5)(B) of this title” each place it appears and inserting “subparagraph (B) or (C) of section 1965(5) of this title”.

Subtitle C—Housing and Employment Programs

SEC. 321. ELIMINATION OF REDUCTION IN ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING FOR DISABLED VETERANS FOR VETERANS HAVING JOINT OWNERSHIP OF HOUSING UNITS.

Section 2102 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) The amount of assistance afforded under subsection (a) for a veteran authorized assistance by section 2101(a) of this title shall not be reduced by reason that title to the housing unit, which is vested in the veteran, is also vested in any other person, if the veteran resides in the housing unit.”.

SEC. 322. VETERANS EMPLOYMENT EMPHASIS UNDER FEDERAL CONTRACTS FOR RECENTLY SEPARATED VETERANS.

(a) EMPLOYMENT EMPHASIS.—Subsection (a) of section 4212 is amended in the first sentence by inserting “recently separated veterans,” after “veterans of the Vietnam era,”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Subsection (d)(1) of that section is amended by inserting “recently separated veterans,” after “veterans of the Vietnam era,” each place it appears in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(c) RECENTLY SEPARATED VETERAN DEFINED.—Section 4211 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) The term ‘recently separated veteran’ means any veteran during the one-year period beginning on the date of such veteran’s discharge or release from active duty.”.

SEC. 323. EMPLOYERS REQUIRED TO GRANT LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN HONOR GUARDS FOR FUNERALS OF VETERANS.

(a) DEFINITION OF SERVICE IN THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.—Section 4303(13) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” after “National Guard duty”; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end “, and a period for which a person is absent from employment for the purpose of performing funeral honors duty as authorized by section 12503 of title 10 or section 115 of title 32.”.

(b) REQUIRED LEAVE OF ABSENCE.—Section 4316 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e)(1) An employer shall grant an employee who is a member of a reserve component an authorized leave of absence from a position of employment to allow that employee to perform funeral honors duty as authorized by section 12503 of title 10 or section 115 of title 32.

“(2) For purposes of section 4312(e)(1) of this title, an employee who takes an authorized leave of absence under paragraph (1) is deemed to have notified the employer of the employee’s intent to return to such position of employment.”.

38 USC 4303
note.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall take effect 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Subtitle D—Cemeteries and Memorial Affairs

SEC. 331. ELIGIBILITY FOR INTERMENT OF CERTAIN FILIPINO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES.

(a) **ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN COMMONWEALTH ARMY VETERANS.**—Section 2402 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(8) Any individual whose service is described in section 107(a) of this title if such individual at the time of death—

“(A) was a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States; and

“(B) resided in the United States.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Section 107(a)(3) is amended to read as follows:

“(3) chapters 11, 13 (except section 1312(a)), 23, and 24 (to the extent provided for in section 2402(8)) of this title.”.

38 USC 107 note.

(c) **APPLICABILITY.**—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 332. PAYMENT RATE OF CERTAIN BURIAL BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN FILIPINO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II.

(a) **PAYMENT RATE.**—Section 107 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “Payments” and inserting “Subject to subsection (c), payments”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new section:

“(c)(1) In the case of an individual described in paragraph (2), the second sentence of subsection (a) shall not apply.

“(2) Paragraph (1) applies to any individual whose service is described in subsection (a) and who dies after the date of the enactment of this subsection if the individual, on the individual’s date of death—

“(A) is a citizen of, or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in, the United States;

“(B) is residing in the United States; and

“(C) either—

“(i) is receiving compensation under chapter 11 of this title; or

“(ii) if the individual’s service had been deemed to be active military, naval, or air service, would have been paid pension under section 1521 of this title without denial or discontinuance by reason of section 1522 of this title.”.

38 USC 107 note.

(b) **APPLICABILITY.**—No benefits shall accrue to any person for any period before the date of the enactment of this Act by reason of the amendments made by subsection (a).

SEC. 333. PLOT ALLOWANCE FOR BURIAL IN STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2303(b)(1)(A) is amended to read as follows: “(A) is used solely for the interment of persons who

are (i) eligible for burial in a national cemetery, and (ii) members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces not otherwise eligible for such burial or former members of such a reserve component not otherwise eligible for such burial who are discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to the burial of persons dying on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

38 USC 2303
note.

TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 401. BENEFITS FOR THE CHILDREN OF WOMEN VIETNAM VETERANS WHO SUFFER FROM CERTAIN BIRTH DEFECTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 18 is amended by adding at the end the following new subchapter:

“SUBCHAPTER II—CHILDREN OF WOMEN VIETNAM VETERANS BORN WITH CERTAIN BIRTH DEFECTS

“§ 1811. Definitions

“In this subchapter:

“(1) The term ‘eligible child’ means an individual who—

“(A) is the child (as defined in section 1821(1) of this title) of a woman Vietnam veteran; and

“(B) was born with one or more covered birth defects.

“(2) The term ‘covered birth defect’ means a birth defect identified by the Secretary under section 1812 of this title.

“§ 1812. Covered birth defects

“(a) **IDENTIFICATION.**—The Secretary shall identify the birth defects of children of women Vietnam veterans that—

“(1) are associated with the service of those veterans in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era; and

“(2) result in permanent physical or mental disability.

“(b) **LIMITATIONS.**—(1) The birth defects identified under subsection (a) may not include birth defects resulting from the following:

“(A) A familial disorder.

“(B) A birth-related injury.

“(C) A fetal or neonatal infirmity with well-established causes.

“(2) In any case where affirmative evidence establishes that a covered birth defect of a child of a woman Vietnam veteran results from a cause other than the active military, naval, or air service of that veteran in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era, no benefits or assistance may be provided the child under this subchapter.

“§ 1813. Health care

“(a) **NEEDED CARE.**—The Secretary shall provide an eligible child such health care as the Secretary determines is needed by the child for that child’s covered birth defects or any disability that is associated with those birth defects.

“(b) **AUTHORITY FOR CARE TO BE PROVIDED DIRECTLY OR BY CONTRACT.**—The Secretary may provide health care under this section directly or by contract or other arrangement with a health care provider.

“(c) **DEFINITIONS.**—For purposes of this section, the definitions in section 1803(c) of this title shall apply with respect to the provision of health care under this section, except that for such purposes—

“(1) the reference to ‘specialized spina bifida clinic’ in paragraph (2) of that section shall be treated as a reference to a specialized clinic treating the birth defect concerned under this section; and

“(2) the reference to ‘vocational training under section 1804 of this title’ in paragraph (8) of that section shall be treated as a reference to vocational training under section 1814 of this title.

“§ 1814. Vocational training

“(a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary may provide a program of vocational training to an eligible child if the Secretary determines that the achievement of a vocational goal by the child is reasonably feasible.

“(b) **APPLICABLE PROVISIONS.**—Subsections (b) through (e) of section 1804 of this title shall apply with respect to any program of vocational training provided under subsection (a).

“§ 1815. Monetary allowance

“(a) **MONTHLY ALLOWANCE.**—The Secretary shall pay a monthly allowance to any eligible child for any disability resulting from the covered birth defects of that child.

“(b) **SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES.**—(1) The amount of the monthly allowance paid under this section shall be based on the degree of disability suffered by the child concerned, as determined in accordance with a schedule for rating disabilities resulting from covered birth defects that is prescribed by the Secretary.

“(2) In prescribing a schedule for rating disabilities for the purposes of this section, the Secretary shall establish four levels of disability upon which the amount of the allowance provided by this section shall be based. The levels of disability established may take into account functional limitations, including limitations on cognition, communication, motor abilities, activities of daily living, and employability.

“(c) **AMOUNT OF MONTHLY ALLOWANCE.**—The amount of the monthly allowance paid under this section shall be as follows:

“(1) In the case of a child suffering from the lowest level of disability prescribed in the schedule for rating disabilities under subsection (b), \$100.

“(2) In the case of a child suffering from the lower intermediate level of disability prescribed in the schedule for rating disabilities under subsection (b), the greater of—

“(A) \$214; or

“(B) the monthly amount payable under section 1805(b)(3) of this title for the lowest level of disability prescribed for purposes of that section.

“(3) In the case of a child suffering from the higher intermediate level of disability prescribed in the schedule for rating disabilities under subsection (b), the greater of—

“(A) \$743; or

“(B) the monthly amount payable under section 1805(b)(3) of this title for the intermediate level of disability prescribed for purposes of that section.

“(4) In the case of a child suffering from the highest level of disability prescribed in the schedule for rating disabilities under subsection (b), the greater of—

“(A) \$1,272; or

“(B) the monthly amount payable under section 1805(b)(3) of this title for the highest level of disability prescribed for purposes of that section.

“(d) INDEXING TO SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT INCREASES.—Amounts under paragraphs (1), (2)(A), (3)(A), and (4)(A) of subsection (c) shall be subject to adjustment from time to time under section 5312 of this title.

“§ 1816. Regulations

“The Secretary shall prescribe regulations for purposes of the administration of this subchapter.”.

(b) CONSOLIDATION OF PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO BOTH SUBCHAPTERS.—Chapter 18 is further amended by adding after subchapter II, as added by subsection (a), the following new subchapter:

“SUBCHAPTER III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

“§ 1821. Definitions

“In this chapter:

“(1) The term ‘child’ means an individual, regardless of age or marital status, who—

“(A) is the natural child of a Vietnam veteran; and

“(B) was conceived after the date on which that veteran first entered the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era.

“(2) The term ‘Vietnam veteran’ means an individual who performed active military, naval, or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era, without regard to the characterization of that individual’s service.

“(3) The term ‘Vietnam era’ with respect to—

“(A) subchapter I of this chapter, means the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975; and

“(B) subchapter II of this chapter, means the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975.

“§ 1822. Applicability of certain administrative provisions

“(a) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS RELATING TO COMPENSATION.—The provisions of this title specified in subsection (b) apply with respect to benefits and assistance under this chapter in the same manner as those provisions apply to compensation paid under chapter 11 of this title.

“(b) SPECIFIED PROVISIONS.—The provisions of this title referred to in subsection (a) are the following:

“(1) Section 5101(c).

“(2) Subsections (a), (b)(2), (g), and (i) of section 5110.

“(3) Section 5111.

“(4) Subsection (a) and paragraphs (1), (6), (9), and (10) of subsection (b) of section 5112.

“§ 1823. Treatment of receipt of monetary allowance and other benefits

“(a) COORDINATION WITH OTHER BENEFITS PAID TO THE RECIPIENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, receipt by an individual of a monetary allowance under this chapter shall not impair, infringe, or otherwise affect the right of the individual to receive any other benefit to which the individual is otherwise entitled under any law administered by the Secretary.

“(b) COORDINATION WITH BENEFITS BASED ON RELATIONSHIP OF RECIPIENTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, receipt by an individual of a monetary allowance under this chapter shall not impair, infringe, or otherwise affect the right of any other individual to receive any benefit to which such other individual is entitled under any law administered by the Secretary based on the relationship of such other individual to the individual who receives such monetary allowance.

“(c) MONETARY ALLOWANCE NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS INCOME OR RESOURCES FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a monetary allowance paid an individual under this chapter shall not be considered as income or resources in determining eligibility for, or the amount of benefits under, any Federal or federally assisted program.

“§ 1824. Nonduplication of benefits

“(a) MONETARY ALLOWANCE.—In the case of an eligible child under subchapter II of this chapter whose only covered birth defect is spina bifida, a monetary allowance shall be paid under subchapter I of this chapter. In the case of an eligible child under subchapter II of this chapter who has spina bifida and one or more additional covered birth defects, a monetary allowance shall be paid under subchapter II of this chapter.

“(b) VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION.—An individual may only be provided one program of vocational training under this chapter.”.

(c) REPEAL OF RECODIFIED PROVISIONS.—The following provisions are repealed:

(1) Section 1801.

(2) Subsections (c) and (d) of section 1805.

(3) Section 1806.

(d) DESIGNATION OF SUBCHAPTER I.—Chapter 18 is further amended by inserting before section 1802 the following:

“SUBCHAPTER I—CHILDREN OF VIETNAM VETERANS BORN WITH SPINA BIFIDA”.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—(1) Section 1802 is amended by striking “this chapter” and inserting “this subchapter”.

(2) Section 1805(a) is amended by striking “this chapter” and inserting “this section”.

(f) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—(1) The chapter heading of chapter 18 is amended to read as follows:

“CHAPTER 18—BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN OF VIETNAM VETERANS”.

(2) The tables of chapters before part I, and at the beginning of part II, are each amended by striking the item relating to chapter 18 and inserting the following new item:

“18. Benefits for Children of Vietnam Veterans 1802”.

(3) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 18 is amended—

(A) by inserting at the beginning the following:

“SUBCHAPTER I—CHILDREN OF VIETNAM VETERANS BORN WITH SPINA BIFIDA”;

(B) by striking the items relating to sections 1801 and 1806; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“SUBCHAPTER II—CHILDREN OF WOMEN VIETNAM VETERANS BORN WITH CERTAIN BIRTH DEFECTS

“1811. Definitions.

“1812. Covered birth defects.

“1813. Health care.

“1814. Vocational training.

“1815. Monetary allowance.

“1816. Regulations.

“SUBCHAPTER III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

“1821. Definitions.

“1822. Applicability of certain administrative provisions.

“1823. Treatment of receipt of monetary allowance and other benefits.

“1824. Nonduplication of benefits.”

(g) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall take effect on the first day of the first month beginning more than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

38 USC 1811
note.

(2) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall identify birth defects under section 1812 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a) of this section), and shall prescribe the regulations required by subchapter II of chapter 18 of that title (as so added), not later than the effective date specified in paragraph (1).

SEC. 402. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN EXPIRING AUTHORITIES.

(a) **ENHANCED LOAN ASSET SALE AUTHORITY.**—Section 3720(h)(2) is amended by striking “December 31, 2002” and inserting “December 31, 2008”.

(b) **HOME LOAN FEES.**—Section 3729 is amended by striking everything after the section heading and inserting the following:

“(a) **REQUIREMENT OF FEE.**—(1) Except as provided in subsection (c), a fee shall be collected from each person obtaining a housing loan guaranteed, insured, or made under this chapter, and each person assuming a loan to which section 3714 of this title applies. No such loan may be guaranteed, insured, made, or assumed until the fee payable under this section has been remitted to the Secretary.

“(2) The fee may be included in the loan and paid from the proceeds thereof.

“(b) **DETERMINATION OF FEE.**—(1) The amount of the fee shall be determined from the loan fee table in paragraph (2). The fee

is expressed as a percentage of the total amount of the loan guaranteed, insured, or made, or, in the case of a loan assumption, the unpaid principal balance of the loan on the date of the transfer of the property.

“(2) The loan fee table referred to in paragraph (1) is as follows:

“LOAN FEE TABLE

| Type of loan | Active duty veteran | Reservist | Other obligor |
|--|------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| (A)(i) Initial loan described in section 3710(a) to purchase or construct a dwelling with 0-down, or any other initial loan described in section 3710(a) other than with 5-down or 10-down (closed before October 1, 2008) | 2.00 | 2.75 | NA |
| (A)(ii) Initial loan described in section 3710(a) to purchase or construct a dwelling with 0-down, or any other initial loan described in section 3710(a) other than with 5-down or 10-down (closed on or after October 1, 2008) | 1.25 | 2.00 | NA |
| (B)(i) Subsequent loan described in section 3710(a) to purchase or construct a dwelling with 0-down, or any other subsequent loan described in section 3710(a) (closed before October 1, 2008) | 3.00 | 3.00 | NA |
| (B)(ii) Subsequent loan described in section 3710(a) to purchase or construct a dwelling with 0-down, or any other subsequent loan described in section 3710(a) (closed on or after October 1, 2008) | 1.25 | 2.00 | NA |
| (C)(i) Loan described in section 3710(a) to purchase or construct a dwelling with 5-down (closed before October 1, 2008) | 1.50 | 2.25 | NA |
| (C)(ii) Loan described in section 3710(a) to purchase or construct a dwelling with 5-down (closed on or after October 1, 2008) | 0.75 | 1.50 | NA |
| (D)(i) Initial loan described in section 3710(a) to purchase or construct a dwelling with 10-down (closed before October 1, 2008) | 1.25 | 2.00 | NA |
| (D)(ii) Initial loan described in section 3710(a) to purchase or construct a dwelling with 10-down (closed on or after October 1, 2008) | 0.50 | 1.25 | NA |
| (E) Interest rate reduction refinancing loan | 0.50 | 0.50 | NA |
| (F) Direct loan under section 3711 | 1.00 | 1.00 | NA |
| (G) Manufactured home loan under section 3712 (other than an interest rate reduction refinancing loan) | 1.00 | 1.00 | NA |
| (H) Loan to Native American veteran under section 3762 (other than an interest rate reduction refinancing loan) | 1.25 | 1.25 | NA |
| (I) Loan assumption under section 3714 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.50 |
| (J) Loan under section 3733(a) | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25” |

“(3) Any reference to a section in the ‘Type of loan’ column in the loan fee table in paragraph (2) refers to a section of this title.

“(4) For the purposes of paragraph (2):

“(A) The term ‘active duty veteran’ means any veteran eligible for the benefits of this chapter other than a Reservist.

“(B) The term ‘Reservist’ means a veteran described in section 3701(b)(5)(A) of this title.

“(C) The term ‘other obligor’ means a person who is not a veteran, as defined in section 101 of this title or other provision of this chapter.

“(D) The term ‘initial loan’ means a loan to a veteran guaranteed under section 3710 or made under section 3711 of this title if the veteran has never obtained a loan guaranteed under section 3710 or made under section 3711 of this title.

“(E) The term ‘subsequent loan’ means a loan to a veteran, other than an interest rate reduction refinancing loan, guaranteed under section 3710 or made under section 3711 of this title if the veteran has previously obtained a loan guaranteed under section 3710 or made under section 3711 of this title.

“(F) The term ‘interest rate reduction refinancing loan’ means a loan described in section 3710(a)(8), 3710(a)(9)(B)(i), 3710(a)(11), 3712(a)(1)(F), or 3762(h) of this title.

“(G) The term ‘0-down’ means a downpayment, if any, of less than 5 percent of the total purchase price or construction cost of the dwelling.

“(H) The term ‘5-down’ means a downpayment of at least 5 percent or more, but less than 10 percent, of the total purchase price or construction cost of the dwelling.

“(I) The term ‘10-down’ means a downpayment of 10 percent or more of the total purchase price or construction cost of the dwelling.

“(c) **WAIVER OF FEE.**—A fee may not be collected under this section from a veteran who is receiving compensation (or who, but for the receipt of retirement pay, would be entitled to receive compensation) or from a surviving spouse of any veteran (including a person who died in the active military, naval, or air service) who died from a service-connected disability.”

(c) **PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO LIQUIDATION SALES ON DEFAULTED HOME LOANS GUARANTEED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**—Section 3732(c)(11) is amended by striking “October 1, 2002” and inserting “October 1, 2008”.

(d) **INCOME VERIFICATION AUTHORITY.**—Section 5317(g) is amended by striking “September 30, 2002” and inserting “September 30, 2008”.

(e) **LIMITATION ON PENSION FOR CERTAIN RECIPIENTS OF MEDICAID-COVERED NURSING HOME CARE.**—Section 5503(f)(7) is amended by striking “September 30, 2002” and inserting “September 30, 2008”.

(f) **ANNUAL REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON MENTALLY ILL VETERANS.**—Section 7321(d)(2) is amended by striking “three” and inserting “six”.

(g) **AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CORPORATIONS.**—Section 7368 is amended by striking “December 31, 2000” and inserting “December 31, 2003”.

SEC. 403. PRESERVATION OF CERTAIN REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) **INAPPLICABILITY OF PRIOR REPORTS TERMINATION PROVISION TO CERTAIN REPORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**—Section 3003(a)(1) of the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995 (31 U.S.C. 1113 note) does not apply to any report

31 USC 1113
note.

required to be submitted under any of the following: sections 503(c), 529, 541(c), 542(c), 3036, and 7312(d) of title 38, United States Code.

(b) REPEAL OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TERMINATED BY PRIOR LAW.—Sections 8111A(f) and 8201(h) are repealed.

(c) SUNSET OF CERTAIN REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT ON EQUITABLE RELIEF CASES.—Section 503(c) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “No report shall be required under this subsection after December 31, 2004.”

(2) BIENNIAL REPORT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR.—Section 541(c)(1) is amended by inserting “through 2003” after “each odd-numbered year”.

(3) BIENNIAL REPORT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN VETERANS.—Section 542(c)(1) is amended by inserting “through 2004” after “each even-numbered year”.

(4) BIENNIAL REPORTS ON MONTGOMERY GI BILL.—Subsection (d) of section 3036 is amended to read as follows:

“(d) No report shall be required under this section after January 1, 2005.”

(5) ANNUAL REPORT OF SPECIAL MEDICAL ADVISORY GROUP.—Section 7312(d) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “No report shall be required under this subsection after December 31, 2004.”

(d) COST INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED WITH EACH REPORT REQUIRED BY CONGRESS.—(1)(A) Chapter 1 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 116. Reports to Congress: cost information

“Whenever the Secretary submits to Congress, or any committee of Congress, a report that is required by law or by a joint explanatory statement of a committee of conference of the Congress, the Secretary shall include with the report—

“(1) a statement of the cost of preparing the report; and

“(2) a brief explanation of the methodology used in preparing that cost statement.”

(B) The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“116. Reports to Congress: cost information.”

38 USC 116 note.

(2) Section 116 of title 38, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1) of this subsection, shall apply with respect to any report submitted by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs after the end of the 90-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 404. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

(a) TITLE 38.—Title 38, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) Section 1116(a)(2)(F) is amended by inserting “of disability” after “to a degree”.

(2) Section 1318(b)(3) is amended by striking “not later than” and inserting “not less than”.

(3) Section 1712(a)(4)(A) is amended by striking “subsection (a) of this section (other than paragraphs (3)(B) and (3)(C) of that subsection)” and inserting “this subsection”.

(4) Section 1720A(c)(1) is amended by striking “for such disability” and all that follows through “to such member” and

inserting “for such disability. Care and services provided to a member so transferred”.

(5) Section 2402(7) is amended by striking “chapter 67 of title 10” and inserting “chapter 1223 of title 10”.

(6) Section 3012(g)(2) is amended by striking “subparagraphs” both places it appears and inserting “subparagraph”.

(7) Section 3684(c) is amended by striking “calender” and inserting “calendar”.

(8) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 41 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 4110A the following new item:

“4110B. Coordination and nonduplication.”.

(9) The text of section 4213 is amended to read as follows:

“(a) Amounts and periods of time specified in subsection (b) shall be disregarded in determining eligibility under any of the following:

“(1) Any public service employment program.

“(2) Any emergency employment program.

“(3) Any job training program assisted under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

“(4) Any employment or training program carried out under title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.).

“(5) Any other employment or training (or related) program financed in whole or in part with Federal funds.

“(b) Subsection (a) applies with respect to the following amounts and periods of time:

“(1) Any amount received as pay or allowances by any person while serving on active duty.

“(2) Any period of time during which such person served on active duty.

“(3) Any amount received under chapters 11, 13, 30, 31, 32, and 36 of this title by an eligible veteran.

“(4) Any amount received by an eligible person under chapters 13 and 35 of this title.

“(5) Any amount received by an eligible member under chapter 106 of title 10.”.

(10) Section 7603(a)(1) is amended by striking “subsection” and inserting “subchapter”.

(b) OTHER LAWS.—

(1) Effective November 30, 1999, and as if included therein as originally enacted, section 208(c)(2) of the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106-117; 113 Stat. 1568) is amended by striking “subsection (c)(1)” and inserting “subsection (c)(3)”.

Effective date.

38 USC 8163 and
note.

Effective date.

38 USC 8153 and
note.

(2) Effective November 21, 1997, and as if included therein as originally enacted, section 402(e) of the Veterans' Benefits Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-114; 111 Stat. 2294) is amended by striking "second sentence" and inserting "third sentence".

Approved November 1, 2000.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1402:

SENATE REPORTS: No. 106-114 (Comm. on Veterans' Affairs).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Vol. 145 (1999): July 26, considered and passed Senate.

Vol. 146 (2000): May 23, considered and passed House, amended.

Oct. 12, Senate concurred in House amendments with amendments.

Oct. 17, House concurred in Senate amendments.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 36 (2000):

Nov. 1, Presidential statement.