

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3047

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing of claims for benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 16, 2007

Mr. LAMBORN (for himself, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. HAYES, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Mr. FORTUÑO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing of claims for benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Claims Proc-
5 essing Innovation Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK CREDIT SYSTEM FOR**
 2 **REGIONAL OFFICES OF VETERANS BENEFITS**
 3 **ADMINISTRATION.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF SYSTEM.—Chapter 7 of title
 5 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end
 6 the following new section:

7 **“§ 713. Veterans Benefits Administration work credit**
 8 **system**

9 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
 10 lish a work credit system for evaluating regional offices
 11 of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

12 “(b) CREDIT FOR CLAIMS.—Under the system estab-
 13 lished under subsection (a), a regional office of the Vet-
 14 erans Benefits Administration may only receive work cred-
 15 it for a claim assigned to that regional office when the
 16 appellate period for the claim has expired or the Board
 17 of Veterans Appeals has issued a final decision with re-
 18 spect to the claim.”.

19 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 20 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding
 21 at the end the following new item:

“713. Veterans Benefits Administration work credit system.”.

22 **SEC. 3. ELECTRONIC PROCESSING OF CLAIMS FOR BENE-**
 23 **FITS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VET-**
 24 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

25 (a) ELECTRONIC PROCESSING OF CLAIMS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle I of chapter 51 of
2 title 38, United States Code, as amended by section
3 3, is further amended by adding at the end the fol-
4 lowing new section:

5 **“§ 5109C. Electronic processing of claims**

6 “(a) SYSTEM REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall de-
7 velop and maintain a system for processing claims for dis-
8 ability compensation under this title using artificial intel-
9 ligence. Such system shall use medical and military service
10 data to generate recommendations with respect to dis-
11 ability ratings.

12 “(b) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—During the period be-
13 ginning on the date that is 90 days after the date of the
14 enactment of this section and ending on the last day of
15 the first full fiscal year after the fiscal year during which
16 the regional office required under section 351(c) of this
17 title is fully operational, the Secretary shall submit to the
18 Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House
19 of Representatives quarterly reports on the status of the
20 system required under subsection (a) and the regional of-
21 fice required under such section.”.

22 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
23 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
24 by adding at the end the following new item:

“5109C. Electronic processing of claims.”.

1 (b) REGIONAL OFFICE.—Section 315 of title 38,
2 United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
3 following new subsection:

4 “(c) The Secretary shall maintain a regional office
5 at which all claims for benefits under this title are proc-
6 essed exclusively electronically. At such regional office, the
7 Secretary shall—

8 “(1) maintain the system based on artificial in-
9 telligence required under section 5109C of this title;
10 and

11 “(2) electronically scan all files created by or
12 submitted to such office that relate to claimants or
13 claims for such benefits.”.

14 (c) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The Sec-
15 retary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a plan for estab-
16 lishing the regional office required under subsection (c)
17 of section 315 of title 38, United States Code, as added
18 by subsection (b), by not later than 90 days after the date
19 of the enactment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 4. TREATMENT OF BENEFICIARY OF VETERAN'S AC-**
2 **CRUED BENEFITS AS CLAIMANT FOR PUR-**
3 **POSES OF INCOMPLETE CLAIMS AS OF**
4 **DEATH OF VETERAN.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5102 of title 38, United
6 States Code, is amended by added at the end the following
7 new subsection:

8 “(d) If a veteran who is a claimant dies before com-
9 pleting the submission of a claim for any benefit under
10 a law administered by the Secretary, the person who would
11 receive any accrued benefits due to the veteran under sec-
12 tion 5121(a)(2) of this title shall be treated as the claim-
13 ant for the purposes of completing the submission of the
14 claim.”.

15 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (d) of section
16 5102 of title 38, United States Code, shall apply with re-
17 spect to the claim of any veteran who dies on or after
18 the date of the enactment of this Act.

19 **SEC. 5. EVALUATION OF TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT PRO-**
20 **GRAMS FOR EMPLOYEES OF VETERANS BEN-**
21 **EFITS ADMINISTRATION.**

22 (a) EVALUATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Vet-
23 erans Affairs shall enter into a contract with a private en-
24 tity with experience evaluating quality assurance and ben-
25 efits programs under which that entity shall—

1 (1) conduct an evaluation of the items required
2 to be included in the annual report of the Secretary
3 under section 7734 of title 38, United States Code,
4 that were included in the last such report submitted
5 before the date of the enactment of this Act, that re-
6 late to the training and performance assessment pro-
7 grams of the Department of Veterans Affairs for
8 employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration
9 who are responsible for matters relating to com-
10 pensation or pension benefits under the laws admin-
11 istered by the Secretary; and

12 (2) submit to the Secretary the results of such
13 evaluation not later than 180 days after the date of
14 the enactment of this Act.

15 (b) SUBMISSION OF RESULTS TO CONGRESS.—Not
16 later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of
17 this Act, In the first annual report required to be sub-
18 mitted to Congress under section 529 of title 38, United
19 States Code, submitted after the date on which the Sec-
20 retary receives the results of the evaluation required under
21 subsection (a), the Secretary shall include such results.

22 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
23 on which the Secretary submits the report referred to in
24 subsection (b), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a
25 report on any actions the Secretary has taken or plans

- 1 to take in response to the results of the evaluation re-
- 2 quired under subsection (a).

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