

113<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 4688

To amend title 10, United States Code, to provide appropriate recognition for the survivors of members of the Armed Forces who die while serving on certain active or reserve duty, to expand the availability of the Gold Star Installation Access Card for survivors of deceased members of the Armed Forces, and to extend commissary store and exchange store and other MWR retail facility benefits to the parents of such members.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 20, 2014

Mr. KEATING introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on Armed Services

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## A BILL

To amend title 10, United States Code, to provide appropriate recognition for the survivors of members of the Armed Forces who die while serving on certain active or reserve duty, to expand the availability of the Gold Star Installation Access Card for survivors of deceased members of the Armed Forces, and to extend commissary store and exchange store and other MWR retail facility benefits to the parents of such members.

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

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Gold Star Families  
3 Equality Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. LAPEL BUTTON FOR NEXT OF KIN OF DECEASED**  
5 **MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

6 (a) SERVICE-WIDE ADOPTION OF NEXT OF KIN  
7 LAPEL BUTTON.—Section 1126 of title 10, United States  
8 Code, is amended—

9 (1) by striking subsection (b);

10 (2) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as  
11 subsections (d) and (e), respectively; and

12 (3) by inserting after subsection (a) the fol-  
13 lowing new subsections:

14 “(b) A lapel button, to be known as the lapel button  
15 for next of kin of deceased members of the armed forces,  
16 shall be designed, as approved by the Secretary of De-  
17 fense, to identify widows, parents, and next of kin of mem-  
18 bers of the armed forces who die, under circumstances not  
19 prescribed by subsection (a), while serving on active duty  
20 or while assigned to a reserve component in a drill status.

21 “(c) Under regulations to be prescribed by the Sec-  
22 retary of Defense, the Secretary concerned, upon applica-  
23 tion to the Secretary, shall furnish—

24 “(1) one gold star lapel button without cost to  
25 the widow and to each parent and next of kin of a

1 member who lost or loses his or her life under any  
2 circumstances prescribed in subsection (a); and

3 “(2) one lapel button for next of kin of de-  
4 ceased members to the widow and to each parent  
5 and next of kin of a member who lost or loses his  
6 or her life under the circumstances prescribed in  
7 subsection (b).”.

8 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Subsection (d) of  
9 section 1126 of title 10, United States Code, as redesign-  
10 nated by subsection (a)(2), is amended by inserting “or  
11 lapel button for next of kin of deceased members” after  
12 “gold star lapel button” both places it appears.

13 (c) USE OF EXISTING DESIGN.—The design of the  
14 lapel button for the next of kin of deceased members of  
15 the Armed Forces required by subsection (b) of section  
16 1126 of title 10, United States Code, as added by sub-  
17 section (a)(3), shall be based on the design of such a lapel  
18 button provided by the Secretary of the Army to certain  
19 survivors of deceased members of the Army, including the  
20 Army Reserve and the Army National Guard, pursuant  
21 to Army regulation 600–6–18, as in effect on the date of  
22 the enactment of this Act.

23 (d) RETROACTIVE AVAILABILITY.—The lapel button  
24 for the next of kin of deceased members of the Armed  
25 Forces required by subsection (b) of section 1126 of title

1 10, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(3),  
2 shall be available to provide appropriate recognition for  
3 the survivors of members of the Armed Forces who have  
4 died since September 10, 2001.

5 **SEC. 3. GOLD STAR INSTALLATION ACCESS CARD.**

6 (a) SERVICE-WIDE ADOPTION OF ACCESS CARD.—  
7 The Secretary of each military department and the Sec-  
8 retary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is op-  
9 erating (in this section referred to as the “Secretary con-  
10 cerned”) shall provide for the issuance of a Gold Star In-  
11 stallation Access Card to Gold Star family members who  
12 are the survivors of deceased members of the Armed  
13 Forces under the jurisdiction of the Secretary concerned  
14 to expedite the ability of a Gold Star family member to  
15 gain unescorted access to military installations for the  
16 purpose of obtaining the on-base services and benefits for  
17 which the Gold Star family member is entitled or eligible.

18 (b) SERVICE-WIDE ACCEPTANCE OF ACCESS  
19 CARD.—The Secretaries concerned shall work jointly to  
20 ensure that a Gold Star Installation Access Card issued  
21 to a Gold Star family member by one Armed Force is ac-  
22 cepted for access to military installations of another  
23 Armed Force.

24 (c) PROTECTION OF INSTALLATION SECURITY.—In  
25 developing, issuing, and accepting the Gold Star Installa-

1 tion Access Card, the Secretary concerned may take such  
2 measures as the Secretary concerned considers nec-  
3 essary—

4 (1) to prevent fraud in the procurement or use  
5 of the Gold Star Installation Access Card;

6 (2) to limit installation access to those areas  
7 that provide the services and benefits for which the  
8 Gold Star family member is entitled or eligible; and

9 (3) to ensure that the availability and use of  
10 the Gold Star Installation Access Card does not ad-  
11 versely affect military installation security.

12 (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 180 days  
13 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretaries  
14 concerned shall complete implementation of this section.

15 (e) GOLD STAR FAMILY MEMBER DEFINED.—In this  
16 section, the term “Gold Star family member” means a  
17 person who has received a Gold Star Lapel Button or a  
18 Lapel Button for the Next of Kin of Deceased Members  
19 of the Armed Forces under section 1126 of title 10,  
20 United States Code.

21 **SEC. 4. USE OF COMMISSARY STORES AND MWR RETAIL FA-**  
22 **CILITIES BY PARENTS OF DECEASED MEM-**  
23 **BERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

24 (a) USE AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of each mili-  
25 tary department and the Secretary of the Department in

1 which the Coast Guard is operating shall prescribe such  
2 regulations as may be necessary to ensure that a parent  
3 of a deceased member of the Armed Forces who receives  
4 a Gold Star Lapel Button or a Lapel Button for the Next  
5 of Kin of Deceased Members of the Armed Forces under  
6 section 1126 of title 10, United States Code, is permitted  
7 to use commissary stores and MWR retail facilities on the  
8 same basis as any surviving spouse or child of the member.

9 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) The term “MWR retail facilities” means ex-  
11 change stores and other revenue generating facilities  
12 operated by nonappropriated fund activities of the  
13 Department of Defense or the department in which  
14 the Coast Guard is operating for the morale, wel-  
15 fare, and recreation of members of the Armed  
16 Forces.

17 (2) The term “parent” includes mother, father,  
18 stepmother, stepfather, mother through adoption, fa-  
19 ther through adoption, or foster parent who stood in  
20 loco parentis.

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