

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2309

To direct a physician or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than 48 hours after such physician or nurse practitioner learns of such death, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 16, 2025

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Ms. HASSAN) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct a physician or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than 48 hours after such physician or nurse practitioner learns of such death, 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 “Veteran Burial Timeli-
5 ness and Death Certificate Accountability Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) States and counties have reported signifi-
 2 cant delays in the signing of death certificates for
 3 veterans who pass away from natural causes.

4 (2) Such delays, caused by the refusal of, or
 5 postponement by, physicians of the Department of
 6 Veterans Affairs have, in some cases, lasted as long
 7 as eight weeks.

8 (3) Such delays prevent the timely burial of de-
 9 ceased veterans and access to survivor benefits.

10 **SEC. 3. TIMELY CERTIFICATION OF THE DEATH OF A VET-**
 11 **ERAN.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—

13 (1) VA PHYSICIAN OR NURSE PRACTITIONER.—
 14 Subject to paragraph (2), a physician or nurse prac-
 15 titioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Af-
 16 fairs who is the primary care provider of a veteran
 17 who dies of natural causes shall certify the death of
 18 such veteran not later than 48 hours after such phy-
 19 sician or nurse practitioner learns of such death.

20 (2) CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER.—If a
 21 physician or nurse practitioner described in para-
 22 graph (1) cannot comply with such paragraph with
 23 respect to a death described in such paragraph, a
 24 coroner or medical examiner in the jurisdiction
 25 where such death occurred may certify such death.

1 (b) REPORT.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
3 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
4 nually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the
5 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and
6 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
7 Representatives a report regarding compliance with
8 subsection (a).

9 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each report required under
10 paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to the year
11 preceding the date of the report, the following ele-
12 ments:

13 (A) The percentage of cases in which a
14 physician or nurse practitioner employed by the
15 Secretary complied with subsection (a)(1).

16 (B) The number of cases in which such a
17 physician or nurse practitioner could not so
18 comply.

19 (C) An identification of the most common
20 reasons why such a physician or nurse practi-
21 tioner could not so comply.

22 (c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act
23 shall require any employee of the Department of Veterans
24 Affairs, including a physician or nurse practitioner, to
25 take an action not in compliance with the laws, regula-

1 tions, or requirements of the appropriate jurisdiction in
2 which the employee is licensed or practicing, or in which
3 a death may need to be certified.

