

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 7816, with An Amendment

(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

118TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 7816

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development center for an assessment of notice letters that the Secretary sends to claimants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 26, 2024

Mr. DUARTE (for himself, Mr. BOST, Mr. VALADAO, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. D'ESPOSITO, and Ms. BUDZINSKI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development center for an assessment of notice letters that the Secretary sends to claimants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes.

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

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Clear Communication
3 for Veterans Claims Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF NOTICES THAT THE**
5 **SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SENDS**
6 **TO CLAIMANTS.**

7 (a) AGREEMENT.—Not later than 30 days after the
8 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
9 erans Affairs shall seek to enter into an agreement with
10 an FFRDC for an assessment of notices that the Sec-
11 retary sends to claimants.

12 (b) ASSESSMENT.—An FFRDC that enters to an
13 agreement under subsection (a) shall submit to the Sec-
14 retary a written assessment of such notices. The assess-
15 ment shall include the following:

16 (1) The determination of the FFRDC, made in
17 consultation with covered entities, whether each such
18 notice may be feasibly altered to reduce paper con-
19 sumption by, and costs to, the Federal Government.

20 (2) The recommendations of the FFRDC re-
21 garding how the Secretary may make such notices
22 clearer to claimants, better organized, and more con-
23 cise.

24 (c) REPORT; IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 90
25 days after the Secretary receives the assessment under
26 subsection (b), the Secretary shall—

1 (1) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-
2 fairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a
3 copy of such assessment; and

4 (2) implement the recommendations in the as-
5 sessment that are in compliance with the laws ad-
6 ministered by the Secretary.

7 (d) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The Sec-
8 retary shall complete the implementation of such rec-
9 ommendations pursuant to subsection (c)(2) by not later
10 than one year after the date on which the Secretary com-
11 mences such implementation.

12 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

13 (1) The term “FFRDC” means a federally
14 funded research and development center.

15 (2) The term “covered entities” includes—

16 (A) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

17 (B) an expert in laws administered by the
18 Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

19 (C) a veterans service organization recog-
20 nized under section 5902 of title 38, United
21 States Code; and

22 (D) an entity that advocates for veterans.

23 (3) The terms “claimant” and “notice” have
24 the meanings given such terms in section 5100 of
25 title 38, United States Code.

1 **SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF**
2 **PENSION.**

3 Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code,
4 is amended by striking “November 30, 2031” and insert-
5 ing “December 31, 2031”.