

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 3705
OFFERED BY MS. ESTY OF CONNECTICUT**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Fair Debt
3 Notice Act of 2017”.

**4 SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NOTICE RE-
5 LATING TO DEBT COLLECTION ACTIVITIES.**

6 (a) DEBT NOTIFICATION LETTERS.—The Secretary
7 of Veterans Affairs shall collaborate with veterans service
8 organizations to write a standard letter to be provided to
9 individuals who the Secretary determines owe debts to the
10 Department of Veterans Affairs. Such letter shall be writ-
11 ten in plain language and shall include a notice of the debt
12 and a clear explanation of—

13 (1) why the individual owes money to the De-
14 partment of Veterans Affairs; and

15 (2) the options available to the individual.

16 (b) DELIVERY OF LETTERS.—The Secretary shall de-
17 velop a method by which individuals may elect to receive
18 debt notification letters by electronic means and shall en-

1 sure, to the extent practicable, that the letter developed
2 under subsection (a) is delivered to intended recipients
3 who have made such an election by both standard mail
4 and by electronic means and to intended recipients who
5 have not made such an election only by standard mail.

6 (c) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—

7 (1) NOTICE OF COMPLETION.—Upon comple-
8 tion of the letter required under subsection (a), the
9 Secretary shall submit to Congress notice of the
10 completion of the letter.

11 (2) PROGRESS REPORTS.—If the Secretary has
12 not submitted the notice required by paragraph (1)
13 by the date that is 90 days after the date of the en-
14 actment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

15 (A) submit to Congress a report describing
16 the progress of the Secretary toward imple-
17 menting subsection (a) and an explanation for
18 why the letter has not been completed; and

19 (B) every 30 days thereafter until the sub-
20 mittal of the notice required by paragraph (1),
21 submit to Congress an update to the report
22 under subparagraph (A) that includes an addi-
23 tional explanation for the failure to complete
24 the letter.

25 (d) STUDY; REPORT.—

1 (1) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
2 shall conduct a study on the process by which the
3 Department of Veterans Affairs notifies veterans of
4 debt collection efforts. Such study shall include—

5 (A) an analysis of the scope of the problem
6 of veterans not receiving debt collection notices;

7 (B) a description of any non-legislative ac-
8 tions the Secretary could take to reduce the
9 number of incorrect or unknown addresses of
10 veterans in the databases of the Department
11 and a timeline for adopting such actions; and

12 (C) an estimate of the costs associated
13 with sending debt collection notices by certified
14 mail.

15 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after
16 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
17 shall submit to Congress a report on the study con-
18 ducted under paragraph (1).

