

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 7153
OFFERED BY MR. BOST OF ILLINOIS**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Department of Vet-
3 erans Affairs Principles of Benefits Automation Act”.

4 SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

5 It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Vet-
6 erans Affairs should increase automation in the processing
7 of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the
8 Secretary in accordance with the following principles:

9 (1) The purpose of automation should be to in-
10 crease the speed and accuracy of claims processing
11 decisions.

12 (2) Automation should be conducted in a man-
13 ner that enhances the productivity of employees of
14 the Department of Veterans Affairs.

15 (3) Automation should be carried out in a man-
16 ner that achieves greater consistency in the proc-
17 essing and rating of claims by relying on patterns of
18 similar evidence in claim files.

1 (4) To the greatest extent possible, automation
2 should be carried out by drawing from information
3 in the possession of the Department, other Govern-
4 ment agencies, and claimants for benefits.

5 (5) Automation of any claims process or deter-
6 mination should not be end-to-end.

7 (6) Employees of the Department should con-
8 tinue to make decisions with respect to the approval
9 of claims and the granting of benefits.

10 (7) Automation should not be carried out in a
11 manner that reduces or infringes upon—

12 (A) the due process rights of claimants for
13 benefits under the laws administered by the
14 Secretary; or

15 (B) the duties of the Secretary to assist
16 and notify claimants.

17 (8) Automation should be carried out while tak-
18 ing all necessary measures to protect the privacy of
19 claimants and their personally identifiable informa-
20 tion.

21 (9) Automation of claims processing should not
22 eliminate or reduce the Veterans Benefits Adminis-
23 tration workforce.

1 **SEC. 3. PLAN FOR MODERNIZATION OF VETERANS BENE-**
2 **FITS ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION TECH-**
3 **NOLOGY SYSTEMS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
6 erans Affairs shall submit to appropriate congressional
7 committees a plan for the modernization of the informa-
8 tion technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Adminis-
9 tration. The plan shall cover the first fiscal year that be-
10 gins after the date of the enactment of this Act and the
11 subsequent four fiscal years and shall include each of the
12 following:

13 (1) An identification of any information system
14 to be modernized or retired, if applicable, during the
15 period covered by the plan.

16 (2) A description of how the Secretary intends
17 to incorporate the principles referred to in section 2
18 into the modernization of such information systems.

19 (3) An identification of targets, for each fiscal
20 year, by which the Secretary intends to complete the
21 modernization of each information system or major
22 component or functionality of such system identified
23 under paragraph (1).

24 (4) Cost estimates for the modernization of
25 each information system identified under paragraph

1 (1) for each fiscal year covered by the plan and in
2 total.

3 (b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—

4 In this section, the term “appropriate congressional com-
5 mittees” means—

6 (1) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the
7 Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans’
8 Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on
9 Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

10 (2) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the
11 Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans’
12 Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on
13 Appropriations of the Senate.

