

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 7337, With an Amendment

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

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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 7337

To require the Archivist of the United States to submit a plan to Congress to eliminate the records backlog at the National Personnel Records Center, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 31, 2022

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. BUSH, and Mr. COOPER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To require the Archivist of the United States to submit a plan to Congress to eliminate the records backlog at the National Personnel Records Center, 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 “Access for Veterans
3 to Records Act of 2022”.

4 **SEC. 2. PLAN TO ELIMINATE RECORDS BACKLOG AT THE**
5 **NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER.**

6 (a) PLAN REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after
7 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Archivist of the
8 United States shall submit to the appropriate congres-
9 sional committees a comprehensive plan for reducing the
10 backlog of requests for records from the National Per-
11 sonnel Records Center and improving the efficiency and
12 responsiveness of operations at the National Personnel
13 Records Center, that includes, at a minimum, the fol-
14 lowing:

15 (1) An estimate of the number of backlogged
16 record requests for veterans.

17 (2) Target timeframes to reduce the backlog.

18 (3) A detailed plan for using existing funds to
19 improve the information technology infrastructure,
20 including secure access to appropriate agency Fed-
21 eral records, to prevent future backlogs.

22 (4) Actions to improve customer service for re-
23 questers.

24 (5) Measurable goals with respect to the com-
25 prehensive plan and metrics for tracking progress
26 toward such goals.

1 (6) Strategies to prevent future record request
2 backlogs, including backlogs caused by an event that
3 prevents employees of the Center from reporting to
4 work in person.

5 (b) UPDATES.—Not later than 90 days after the date
6 on which the comprehensive plan is submitted under sub-
7 section (a), and biannually thereafter until the response
8 rate by the National Personnel Records Center reaches 90
9 percent of all requests in 20 days or less, not including
10 any request involving a record damaged or lost in the Na-
11 tional Personnel Records Center fire of 1973 or any re-
12 quest that is subject to a fee that has not been paid in
13 a timely manner by the requestor (provided the National
14 Personnel Records Center issues an invoice within 20 days
15 after the date on which the request is made), the Archivist
16 of the United States shall submit to the appropriate con-
17 gressional committees an update of such plan that—

18 (1) describes progress made by the National
19 Personnel Records Center during the preceding 90-
20 day period with respect to record request backlog re-
21 duction and efficiency and responsiveness improve-
22 ment;

23 (2) provides data on progress made toward the
24 goals identified in the comprehensive plan; and

1 (3) describes any changes made to the com-
2 prehensive plan.

3 (c) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—In carrying out
4 subsections (a) and (b), the Archivist of the United States
5 shall consult with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

6 (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
7 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-
8 gressional committees” means—

9 (1) the Committee on Oversight and Reform
10 and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
11 House of Representatives; and

12 (2) the Committee on Homeland Security and
13 Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Vet-
14 erans’ Affairs of the Senate.

15 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS RECORDS**

16 **BACKLOG.**

17 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addi-
18 tion to amounts otherwise available, there is authorized
19 to be appropriated to the National Archives and Records
20 Administration, \$60,000,000 to address backlogs in re-
21 sponding to requests from veterans for military personnel
22 records, improve cybersecurity, improve digital preserva-
23 tion and access to archival Federal records, and address
24 backlogs in requests made under section 552 of title 5,
25 United States Code (commonly referred to as the Freedom

1 of Information Act). Such amounts may also be used for
2 the Federal Records Center Program.

3 (b) REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN IN-PERSON STAFF-
4 ING LEVELS.—Not later than 30 days after the date of
5 the enactment of this Act, the Archivist of the United
6 States shall ensure that the National Personnel Records
7 Center maintains staffing levels and telework arrange-
8 ments that enable the maximum processing of records re-
9 quests possible in order to achieve the performance goal
10 of responding to 90 percent of all requests in 20 days or
11 less, not including any request involving a record damaged
12 or lost in the National Personnel Records Center fire of
13 1973 or any request that is subject to a fee that has not
14 been paid in a timely manner by the requestor (provided
15 the National Personnel Records Center issues an invoice
16 within 20 days after the date on which the request is
17 made).

18 (c) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORTING.—The Inspec-
19 tor General for the National Archives and Records Admin-
20 istration shall, for two years following the date of the en-
21 actment of this Act, include in every semiannual report
22 submitted to Congress pursuant to the Inspector General
23 Act of 1978, a detailed summary of—

24 (1) efforts taken by the National Archives and
25 Records Administration to address the backlog of

1 records requests at the National Personnel Records
2 Center; and
3 (2) any recommendations for action proposed
4 by the Inspector General related to reducing the
5 backlog of records requests at the National Per-
6 sonnel Records Center and the status of compliance
7 with those recommendations by the National Ar-
8 chives and Records Administration.