

S 2484

Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004

Congress: 108 (2003–2005, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Armed Forces and National Security

Introduced: Jun 1, 2004

Current Status: Became Public Law No: 108-445.

Latest Action: Became Public Law No: 108-445. (Dec 3, 2004)

Law: 108-445 (Enacted Dec 3, 2004)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/senate-bill/2484>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Specter, Arlen [R-PA]

Party: Republican • **State:** PA • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors

No cosponsors are listed for this bill.

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Veterans' Affairs Committee	Senate	Reported By	Sep 24, 2004
Veterans' Affairs Committee	House	Bills of Interest - Exchange of Letters	Dec 6, 2004

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Armed Forces and National Security

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

(This measure has not been amended since it was passed by the Senate on October 5, 2004. The summary of that version is repeated here.)

Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004 - (Sec. 3) Amends Federal provisions concerning grades and pay levels for physicians and dentists employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs to replace the current seven physician and dentist grades with a physician grade and dentist grade.

Replaces provisions providing special pay to Department physicians and dentists with provisions which provide a pay system composed of three different elements. Makes the first element of such pay base pay, with 15 pay steps based on the total years of service in the Department's Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Increases the base pay for each step achieved, from step 1 (two years or less of such service) to step 15 (more than 28 years).

Makes the second element of such pay market pay, which is pay intended to reflect the recruitment and retention needs for the specialty or assignment of a particular physician or dentist in a Department facility. Requires the annual amount of such pay to be determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on a case-by-case basis, requiring the Secretary to consult two or more national surveys concerning physician and dentist pay. Requires such market pay to be reevaluated at least every 24 months.

Makes the third element of such pay performance pay, which is pay based on the physician's or dentist's achievement of specific goals and performance objectives as prescribed by the Secretary. Provides a fiscal year performance pay limit of \$15,000 or 7.5 percent of the total of base pay and market pay.

Requires the Secretary, at least every two years, to prescribe for Department-wide applicability the minimum and maximum amounts of total pay to Department physicians and dentists.

Places at Level III of the Executive Schedule the annual rate of basic pay for the VHA position of Under Secretary for Health, allowing such pay to be increased by market pay when the person so serving is also a Department physician or dentist.

Directs the Secretary to: (1) prescribe regulations for VHA physician and dentist pay based on changes made by this Act; and (2) report annually for the next five years to the congressional veterans' committees on such pay.

Provides: (1) initial rates of base pay for Department physicians and dentists based on changes made by this Act; and (2) transition provisions for current Department physicians and dentists.

Terminates the special pay currently authorized for the Under Secretary for Health.

(Sec. 4) Authorizes the Secretary, in order to obtain or retain the services of registered nurses at any Department health-care facility, to establish two alternative work schedules for such nurses: (1) the "36/40" schedule, consisting of three 12-hour shifts (36 hours) in a work week but paid as a full work week (40 hours); and (2) the "9-month" schedule, consisting of nine months of work with three months off, allowing 75 percent of the normal annual pay for such position apportioned over a 12-month period.

Requires the Secretary to certify annually to Congress over the next three years whether each Department facility has in place a policy designed to prevent work hours by nurses providing direct patient care (other than emergency care) in excess of 12 consecutive hours or 60 hours in any seven-day period.

(Sec. 5) Authorizes the Secretary, in order to recruit and retain highly qualified Department nurse executives, to pay to each nurse executive employed at a Department health-care facility or the Central Office an annual special pay of at least \$10,000 and up to \$25,000, based on current pay grade, qualifications, complexity of duties, etc.

Actions Timeline

- **Dec 3, 2004:** Signed by President.
- **Dec 3, 2004:** Signed by President.
- **Dec 3, 2004:** Became Public Law No: 108-445.
- **Dec 3, 2004:** Became Public Law No: 108-445.
- **Nov 22, 2004:** Presented to President.
- **Nov 22, 2004:** Presented to President.
- **Nov 17, 2004:** Mr. Simmons moved to suspend the rules and pass the bill.
- **Nov 17, 2004:** Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H9787-9793)
- **Nov 17, 2004:** DEBATE - The House proceeded with forty minutes of debate on S. 2484.
- **Nov 17, 2004:** Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill Agreed to by voice vote.(text: CR H9787-9790)
- **Nov 17, 2004:** On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill Agreed to by voice vote. (text: CR H9787-9790)
- **Nov 17, 2004:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Oct 6, 2004:** Received in the House.
- **Oct 6, 2004:** Message on Senate action sent to the House.
- **Oct 6, 2004:** Held at the desk.
- **Oct 5, 2004:** Measure laid before Senate by unanimous consent. (consideration: CR S10460-10465; text of measure as reported in Senate: CR S10461-10465)
- **Oct 5, 2004:** The committee substitute as amended agreed to by Unanimous Consent.
- **Oct 5, 2004:** Passed/agreed to in Senate: Passed Senate with an amendment and an amendment to the Title by Unanimous Consent.
- **Oct 5, 2004:** Passed Senate with an amendment and an amendment to the Title by Unanimous Consent.
- **Sep 23, 2004:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Reported by Senator Specter with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title. With written report No. 108-357.
- **Sep 23, 2004:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Reported by Senator Specter with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title. With written report No. 108-357.
- **Sep 23, 2004:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 713.
- **Jul 20, 2004:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with amendments favorably.
- **Jun 22, 2004:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held.
- **Jun 1, 2004:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 1, 2004:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR S6280)
- **Jun 1, 2004:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. (text of measure as introduced: CR S6280-6282)