

S 1315

Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007

Congress: 110 (2007–2009, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Armed Forces and National Security

Introduced: May 7, 2007

Current Status: Message on House action received in Senate and at desk: House amendment to Senate bill.

Latest Action: Message on House action received in Senate and at desk: House amendment to Senate bill. (Sep 23, 2008)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/senate-bill/1315>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Akaka, Daniel K. [D-HI]

Party: Democratic • **State:** HI • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (1 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Salazar, Ken [D-CO]	D · CO		Apr 22, 2008

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Veterans' Affairs Committee	Senate	Reported By	Aug 29, 2007

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Armed Forces and National Security

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2008 - **Title I: Insurance Matters** - (Sec. 101) Allows administrative costs of the Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance program to be paid through premiums.

(Sec. 102) Includes all (under current law, only certain active-duty) members of the Individual Ready Reserve under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program. Revises provisions relating to the termination of SGLI coverage for a dependent to provide that such coverage may terminate upon termination of the dependent's status as an insurable dependent of the member. (Under current law, such coverage may terminate 120 days following termination of such status.)

(Sec. 103) Requires the Secretary of Defense to develop a form for the designation of a recipient of funds for traumatic injury coverage under SGLI in cases where the member is mentally incapacitated or experiencing an extended loss of consciousness.

Title II: Housing Matters - (Sec. 201) Authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Secretary), in the case of a member determined to have a total and permanent disability incurred or aggravated in the line of active duty, to furnish home improvements and structural alterations for the member for such disability while the member is hospitalized or receiving outpatient care, medical services, or treatment, if the Secretary determines that the member is likely to be discharged or released from the Armed Forces due to the disability.

Title III: Labor and Education Matters - (Sec. 301) Directs the Secretary to ensure the coordination of educational course approval activities by state approving agencies with approval activities performed by the Departments of Labor and Education and other appropriate entities. Requires a report from the Secretary to the congressional veterans' committees on actions taken to establish outcome-oriented performance standards for, and a tracking and reporting system for resources expended by, approving agencies.

(Sec. 302) Authorizes the Secretary to waive, for public interest purposes on a case-by-case basis, the residency requirement for a Director for Veterans' Employment and Training.

(Sec. 303) Includes veterans of the Post 9/11 Global War on Terror within an annual (currently, biennial) veterans' unemployment study.

Title IV: Court Matters - (Sec. 401) Eliminates the 180-day per-year limit on service of retired judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court) who voluntarily return to such service. Establishes a three-tiered retirement pay structure for Court judges appointed after the enactment of this Act. Requires recalled judges to receive the pay of current judges during the period of recall, less the amount of any applicable annuity. Prohibits recall service in excess of five years for judges recalled involuntarily.

(Sec. 402) Removes the \$30 annual limit on practice and registration fees for those admitted to practice before the Court. Requires any fees charged to be reasonable.

(Sec. 403) Requires an annual report from the chief judge to the veterans' committees summarizing the Court's workload.

(Sec. 404) Expresses the sense of Congress that the Court should be provided with appropriate office space, without undue disruption, inconvenience, or cost. Requires a report from the Administrator of General Services to the veterans' committees on the feasibility of leasing additional space for the Court, and on using the entire building in which the Court

is housed as a Veterans Courthouse and Justice Center.

Title V: Other Matters - (Sec. 501) Revises provisions concerning the VA's program of outreach to veterans to: (1) include members of the National Guard and reserves; and (2) define "outreach" as the proactive provision of information, services, and benefits counseling to veterans, and to the spouses, children, and parents of veterans who may be eligible to receive benefits through the VA.

(Sec. 502) Amends the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to allow members of the Armed Forces who receive orders to deploy outside the United States for not less than 90 days to terminate or suspend their cell phone contracts without incurring early termination or reactivation fees if their ability to fulfill the service contract or to utilize the service will be materially affected by such deployment.

(Sec. 503) Directs the Medical Follow-Up Agency of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies to maintain and manage the assets (including electronic data files and biological specimens of study participants) transferred to the Agency from the Air Force Health Study. Authorizes the Agency, during FY2008-FY2012, to conduct additional research on such assets toward the goal of understanding the determinants of health, and promoting wellness, in veterans. Requires an Agency report to Congress assessing the feasibility and advisability of conducting additional research on such assets after the end of FY2012. Provides funding.

(Sec. 504) Requires: (1) the Secretary to contract with the Institute, above, to conduct a comprehensive epidemiological study to identify any increased risk of developing multiple sclerosis as a result of service in the Persian Gulf or in the Post 9/11 global operations theaters; and (2) an interim and final results report from the Institute to the Secretary and the veterans' committees.

(Sec. 505) Directs the Comptroller General to report to the veterans' and appropriations committees on the adequacy of dependency and indemnity compensation in replacing a deceased veteran's income for surviving spouses and dependents of veterans who die from service-connected disabilities.

Actions Timeline

- **Sep 23, 2008:** Message on House action received in Senate and at desk: House amendment to Senate bill.
- **Sep 22, 2008:** Mr. Filner moved to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.
- **Sep 22, 2008:** Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H8487-8491)
- **Sep 22, 2008:** DEBATE - The House proceeded with forty minutes of debate on S. 1315.
- **Sep 22, 2008:** Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by voice vote.(text: CR H8487-8490)
- **Sep 22, 2008:** On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by voice vote. (text: CR H8487-8490)
- **Sep 22, 2008:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Apr 24, 2008:** Considered by Senate. (consideration: CR S3347-3363)
- **Apr 24, 2008:** The committee substitute as amended agreed to by Unanimous Consent.
- **Apr 24, 2008:** Passed/agreed to in Senate: Passed Senate with an amendment and an amendment to the Title by Yea-Nay Vote. 96 - 1. Record Vote Number: 112.(text; CR S3355-3363)
- **Apr 24, 2008:** Passed Senate with an amendment and an amendment to the Title by Yea-Nay Vote. 96 - 1. Record Vote Number: 112. (text; CR S3355-3363)
- **Apr 24, 2008:** Received in the House.
- **Apr 24, 2008:** Message on Senate action sent to the House.
- **Apr 24, 2008:** Held at the desk.
- **Apr 23, 2008:** Motion to proceed to consideration of measure agreed to in Senate by Unanimous Consent. (consideration: CR S3288)
- **Apr 23, 2008:** Measure laid before Senate by motion. (consideration: CR S3288-3296, S3296-3297; text of measure as reported in House: CR S3288-3296)
- **Apr 22, 2008:** Motion to proceed to measure considered in Senate by Unanimous Consent. (consideration: CR S3221-3227, S3227-3233, S3233-3248)
- **Apr 22, 2008:** Cloture on the motion to proceed invoked in Senate by Yea-Nay Vote. 94 - 0. Record Vote Number: 109. (consideration: CR S3225; text: CR S3225)
- **Apr 17, 2008:** Motion to proceed to consideration of measure made in Senate.
- **Apr 17, 2008:** Cloture motion on the motion to proceed presented in Senate. (consideration: CR S3169; text: CR S3169)
- **Aug 29, 2007:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Reported by Senator Akaka under authority of the order of the Senate of 08/03/2007 with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title. With written report No. 110-148.
- **Aug 29, 2007:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 336.
- **Jun 27, 2007:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with amendments favorably.
- **May 7, 2007:** Introduced in Senate
- **May 7, 2007:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR S5657)
- **May 7, 2007:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. (text of measure as introduced: CR S5658)