

S 928

Claims Processing Improvement Act of 2013

Congress: 113 (2013–2015, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Armed Forces and National Security

Introduced: May 9, 2013

Current Status: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 113-111.

Latest Action: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 113-111. (Jun 12, 2013)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/928>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Sanders, Bernard [I-VT]

Party: Independent • **State:** VT • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (4 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Tester, Jon [D-MT]	D · MT		May 22, 2013
Sen. Begich, Mark [D-AK]	D · AK		Jun 13, 2013
Sen. Brown, Sherrod [D-OH]	D · OH		Jul 15, 2013
Sen. Schumer, Charles E. [D-NY]	D · NY		Nov 6, 2013

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Veterans' Affairs Committee	Senate	Hearings By (full committee)	Jun 12, 2013

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Armed Forces and National Security

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
113 HR 2528	Related bill	Jul 12, 2013: Referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Claims Processing Improvement Act of 2013 - Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish: (1) a working group to assess and develop recommendations for improving the employee work credit and work management systems of the Veterans Benefits Administration, and (2) a task force to assess the retention and training of claims processors and adjudicators employed by the VA and other federal departments and agencies.

Requires the Secretary, in providing assistance to a VA benefits claimant, to make no fewer than two attempts to obtain needed records from another federal department or agency, and to notify the claimant of the inability to obtain all of the records sought. Requires a record sought before the adjudication of a claim but received after such adjudication to be considered part of the original record.

Authorizes the Secretary to recognize representatives of Indian tribes in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of VA claims.

Directs the Secretary to: (1) carry out a pilot program of including the participation of local governments and tribal organizations in improving the quality of disability compensation claims submitted to the VA, and (2) report quarterly through 2015 to the congressional veterans committees on the backlog of submitted claims.

Changes from one year to 180 days the filing period of a notice of disagreement to a decision on a claim, after which appellate review will be initiated. Allows the Secretary to waive such deadline for good cause shown, as long as such notice is filed within 186 days after the original deadline.

Revises the manner of appearance (in person, through picture and voice transmission, etc.) and appropriate location of a hearing before the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Authorizes the Secretary to disclose VA patient medical records, as appropriate under an appeal, to the Supreme Court, a U.S. Court of Appeals, or the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

Extends: (1) VA authority to operate a regional office in the Republic of the Philippines, (2) the period for the scheduling of VA medical exams for veterans receiving temporary disability ratings due to severe mental disorders, (3) the marriage delimiting date for surviving spouses of Persian Gulf War veterans to qualify for a VA death pension, and (4) the temporary authority for the performance of VA medical disability examinations by contract physicians.

Requires a report from the Secretary to the veterans committees on: (1) the furnishing of general and specialty medical examinations by the VA for purposes of adjudicating benefits claims, and (2) progress of the VA's acceptable clinical evidence initiative in reducing the necessity for in-person disability examinations and other efforts to comply with requirements concerning the acceptance of reports of private physicians.

Actions Timeline

- **Jun 12, 2013:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 113-111.
- **May 9, 2013:** Introduced in Senate
- **May 9, 2013:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR S3337-3338)
- **May 9, 2013:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. (text of measure as introduced: CR S3338-3341)