

## S 2473

### Express Appeals Act of 2016

**Congress:** 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Armed Forces and National Security

**Introduced:** Jan 28, 2016

**Current Status:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-558.

**Latest Action:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-558. (Mar 15, 2016)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2473>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Sullivan, Dan [R-AK]

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

### Cosponsors (9 total)

| Cosponsor                         | Party / State | Role | Date Joined  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------|--------------|
| Sen. Casey, Robert P., Jr. [D-PA] | D · PA        |      | Jan 28, 2016 |
| Sen. Heller, Dean [R-NV]          | R · NV        |      | Jan 28, 2016 |
| Sen. Tester, Jon [D-MT]           | D · MT        |      | Jan 28, 2016 |
| Sen. Daines, Steve [R-MT]         | R · MT        |      | Feb 3, 2016  |
| Sen. Moran, Jerry [R-KS]          | R · KS        |      | Feb 9, 2016  |
| Sen. Coons, Christopher A. [D-DE] | D · DE        |      | Mar 7, 2016  |
| Sen. Grassley, Chuck [R-IA]       | R · IA        |      | Mar 9, 2016  |
| Sen. Baldwin, Tammy [D-WI]        | D · WI        |      | Apr 5, 2016  |
| Sen. Rounds, Mike [R-SD]          | R · SD        |      | Apr 18, 2016 |

### Committee Activity

| Committee                   | Chamber | Activity                     | Date         |
|-----------------------------|---------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Veterans' Affairs Committee | Senate  | Hearings By (full committee) | Mar 15, 2016 |

### Subjects & Policy Tags

#### Policy Area:

Armed Forces and National Security

### Related Bills

| Bill       | Relationship | Last Action  |
|------------|--------------|--|
| 114 S 2921 | Related bill | May 16, 2016: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 467.                      |
| 114 HR 677 | Related bill | Feb 10, 2016: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.          |
| 114 HR 800 | Related bill | Jul 9, 2015: Forwarded by Subcommittee to Full Committee in the Nature of a Substitute (Amended) by Voice Vote . |

## Express Appeals Act of 2016

This bill directs the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to: (1) carry out a five-year pilot program to provide the option of an alternative appeals process to determine appeals of claims for disability compensation more quickly, and (2) inform claimants about such program.

Appeals filed under the pilot program are described as "fully developed appeals."

A claimant may elect to file a fully developed appeal by filing with the VA: (1) a notice of disagreement along with the claimant's written election to have the appeal determined under the pilot program, (2) all evidence that the claimant believes is needed for the appeal, and (3) a statement of the argument in support of the claim.

A claimant who elects the pilot program may elect to revert to the standard appeals process at any time. Such reversion, however, shall be final.

Such a claimant or an electing claimant who is later determined to be ineligible for the pilot program shall revert to the standard appeals process without any penalty other than the loss of docket number.

The VA shall transfer jurisdiction over a fully developed appeal directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

The Board shall:

- maintain fully developed appeals on a separate docket;
- hear fully developed appeals in the order received;
- decide not more than one fully developed appeal for each four traditional appeals decided, though this ratio may be adjusted for fairness purposes beginning one year after the pilot program begins; and
- decide each fully developed appeal within one year of a claimant's filing the notice of disagreement.

A claimant may not submit or identify to the Board any new evidence relating to a fully developed appeal after filing such appeal unless the claimant reverts to the standard appeals process.

The Board shall establish an office to develop necessary federal records, independent medical opinions, and new medical exams.

The Board may not provide hearings for fully developed appeals.

## Actions Timeline

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- **Mar 15, 2016:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-558.
- **Jan 28, 2016:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jan 28, 2016:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.