

## S 3479

Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2018

**Congress:** 115 (2017–2019, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

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

**Introduced:** Sep 18, 2018

**Current Status:** Became Public Law No: 115-251.

**Latest Action:** Became Public Law No: 115-251. (Sep 29, 2018)

**Law:** 115-251 (Enacted Sep 29, 2018)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3479>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Isakson, Johnny [R-GA]

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

### Cosponsors (1 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Tester, Jon [D-MT]	D · MT		Sep 18, 2018

### Committee Activity

*No committee referrals or activity are recorded for this bill.*

### Subjects & Policy Tags

**Policy Area:**

Armed Forces and National Security

### Related Bills

*No related bills are listed.*

## **Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2018**

This bill extends and otherwise revises specified Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs and services, including those related to health care, benefits, and homeless veteran reintegration.

### **TITLE I--EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORITY**

#### **Subtitle A--Health Care Matters**

(Sec. 101) The bill extends through FY2020 copayment guidelines for hospital care and nursing home care.

(Sec. 102) The bill extends through FY2020 VA authority to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities.

(Sec. 103) The bill removes appropriations limitations on family caregiver assistance for veterans.

(Sec. 104) The bill makes permanent the authority of the VA to recover from a third party the costs of care for a non-service-connected disability.

(Sec. 105) VA authority to transfer real property is extended through FY2020.

(Sec. 106) The bill extends through FY2020 a pilot program for providing child care for veterans receiving health care.

(Sec. 107) The bill extends through FY2020 the VA's grant authority for programs related to rural veteran transportation in connection with the provision of medical care.

(Sec. 108) The bill extends through FY2020 a pilot program related to reintegration and counseling in retreat settings for women veterans.

(Sec. 109) The bill extends through FY2019 an initiative to assess the feasibility of paying actual travel expenses in connection with veterans receiving care from VA centers.

#### **Subtitle B--Benefits Matters**

(Sec. 121) The bill makes permanent the authority of the VA to assist certain veterans with difficulty ambulating in acquiring and adapting housing with special features.

(Sec. 122) The bill extends through FY2020 grants to encourage the development of new assistive technologies for specially adapted housing.

(Sec. 123) The bill makes permanent the authority of the VA to guarantee certain mortgage-backed securities.

(Sec. 124) The bill makes permanent provisions related to calculating the value of foreclosed property.

(Sec. 125) The bill extends through FY2019 the VA's authority regarding property management.

(Sec. 126) The bill makes permanent the authority of the VA to provide rehabilitation and vocational benefits for members and former members of the armed services with severe injuries or illnesses.

(Sec. 127) The bill extends through FY2020 the agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to research associations between diseases and certain chemical compounds in herbicides.

#### Subtitle C--Homeless Veterans Matters

(Sec. 141) The bill extends through FY2020 a program for homeless veteran reintegration.

(Sec. 142) The bill extends through FY2020 a reintegration program for homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children.

(Sec. 143) This bill extends through FY2020 referral and counseling services for veterans at risk for homelessness transitioning from institutional living.

(Sec. 144) This bill extends through FY2020 programs providing outreach services and other assistance to homeless veterans and veterans with severe mental illness.

(Sec. 145) The bill increases the amounts authorized to be appropriated in FY2018 and FY2019 for financial assistance for entities that support very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.

(Sec. 146) The bill extends through FY2020 grant programs for homeless veterans with special needs.

(Sec. 147) The bill extends through FY2022 the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans.

#### Subtitle D--Other Matters

(Sec. 161) The bill extends through FY2020 the authority to transport individuals to and from VA facilities.

(Sec. 162) The bill extends through FY2019 the authority for operation of the VA's regional office in Manila, Philippines.

(Sec. 163) The bill extends through FY2020 authorization of appropriations for the VA to provide monthly assistance allowances to specified veterans participating in Olympic programs.

(Sec. 164) The bill extends through 2020 the VA's reporting requirement regarding equitable relief.

(Sec. 165) The bill extends through FY2020 the authorization of appropriations for the Adaptive Sports Program for disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces.

(Sec. 166) The bill: (1) extends through FY2022 the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, and (2) requires the committee to report on relevant VA activities every other year rather than every year.

#### TITLE II--IMPROVEMENT OF HEALTH CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

(Sec. 201) The bill provides that modifications to contracts under the Veterans Community Care Program are not subject to specified bid requirements.

(Sec. 203) Veterans Care Agreement coverage is expanded to any individual eligible for services through the VA. (The Veterans Care Agreement is a program that provides third-party health care if health care is not feasibly available from a VA facility.)

(Sec. 204) The VA is allowed (currently, required) to deduct overpayments from payments owed to a health care entity.

The VA may also use other means to collect overpayments.

(Sec. 205) The bill expands eligibility for specified mental health services to veterans eligible for, but not enrolled in, VA health care.

(Sec. 206) The bill expands the network of prescription drug monitoring programs accessible to VA health care providers to include state and regional programs not a part of the national network.

(Sec. 207) The bill eliminates reporting requirements related to activities contracted out by the VA.

(Sec. 208) The VA must complete additional reporting regarding the availability of opioid receptor antagonists (e.g., naloxone).

(Sec. 209) The bill expands certain health care assessment reports to include the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

(Sec. 210) The bill authorizes a specified medical facility project in West Los Angeles, California.

(Sec. 211) The bill extends a veterans medical school scholarship program to the entering class of 2020.

### TITLE III--OTHER MATTERS

(Sec. 301) An educational institution providing educational benefits to veterans must charge in-state tuition rates for certain veterans entitled to rehabilitation as a condition of the institution's participation in certain VA education benefit programs.

(Sec. 302) The bill revises conflict of interest restrictions for VA employees related to educational institutions. Specifically, the bill removes advance notice and hearing requirements regarding conflict waivers, limits the restrictions to those VA employees working on education benefit programs, and reduces the punishment for such activity.

(Sec. 303) The bill revises VA authority to enter into certain leases at the West Los Angeles, California, campus. Specifically, in the case of previous mismanagement, the VA may not enter into a new lease or land-sharing agreement until the VA certifies compliance with certain audit reports or evaluations.

## Actions Timeline

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- **Sep 29, 2018:** Signed by President.
- **Sep 29, 2018:** Became Public Law No: 115-251.
- **Sep 28, 2018:** Presented to President.
- **Sep 25, 2018:** Mr. Arrington moved to suspend the rules and pass the bill.
- **Sep 25, 2018:** Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H8754-8759)
- **Sep 25, 2018:** DEBATE - The House proceeded with forty minutes of debate on S. 3479.
- **Sep 25, 2018:** Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill Agreed to by voice vote.(text: CR H8754-8758)
- **Sep 25, 2018:** On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill Agreed to by voice vote. (text: CR H8754-8758)
- **Sep 25, 2018:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Sep 24, 2018:** Received in the House.
- **Sep 24, 2018:** Held at the desk.
- **Sep 20, 2018:** Message on Senate action sent to the House.
- **Sep 18, 2018:** Introduced in Senate
- **Sep 18, 2018:** Passed/agreed to in Senate: Introduced in the Senate, read twice, considered, read the third time, and passed without amendment by Voice Vote.(consideration: CR S6254-6258; text: CR S6254-6258)
- **Sep 18, 2018:** Introduced in the Senate, read twice, considered, read the third time, and passed without amendment by Voice Vote. (consideration: CR S6254-6258; text: CR S6254-6258)