

S 89

Ensuring Survivor Benefits during COVID–19 Act of 2021

Congress: 117 (2021–2023, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Armed Forces and National Security

Introduced: Jan 28, 2021

Current Status: Held at the desk.

Latest Action: Held at the desk. (Jul 26, 2021)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/89>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Sinema, Kyrsten [D-AZ]

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

Cosponsors (17 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Blumenthal, Richard [D-CT]	D · CT		Jan 28, 2021
Sen. Boozman, John [R-AR]	R · AR		Jan 28, 2021
Sen. Coons, Christopher A. [D-DE]	D · DE		Jan 28, 2021
Sen. Shaheen, Jeanne [D-NH]	D · NH		Jan 28, 2021
Sen. Tillis, Thomas [R-NC]	R · NC		Jan 28, 2021
Sen. Warren, Elizabeth [D-MA]	D · MA		Jan 28, 2021
Sen. Manchin, Joe, III [D-WV]	D · WV		Feb 23, 2021
Sen. Collins, Susan M. [R-ME]	R · ME		Mar 2, 2021
Sen. Reed, Jack [D-RI]	D · RI		Mar 2, 2021
Sen. Markey, Edward J. [D-MA]	D · MA		Mar 10, 2021
Sen. Whitehouse, Sheldon [D-RI]	D · RI		Mar 23, 2021
Sen. Wicker, Roger F. [R-MS]	R · MS		Mar 23, 2021
Sen. Kelly, Mark [D-AZ]	D · AZ		May 11, 2021
Sen. Peters, Gary C. [D-MI]	D · MI		May 11, 2021
Sen. Baldwin, Tammy [D-WI]	D · WI		May 18, 2021
Sen. Hassan, Margaret Wood [D-NH]	D · NH		May 26, 2021
Sen. King, Angus S., Jr. [I-ME]	I · ME		Jun 8, 2021

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Veterans' Affairs Committee	Senate	Reported By	Jun 24, 2021

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Armed Forces and National Security

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
117 HR 746	Identical bill	Mar 16, 2021: Referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Summary (as of Jul 21, 2021)

Ensuring Survivor Benefits during COVID-19 Act of 2021

This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to obtain a medical opinion that determines whether a service-connected disability was the principal or contributory cause of death for a veteran who died from COVID-19.

Specifically, the VA must obtain this determination before notifying a claimant for survivor benefits of the final decision regarding such benefits in any case where

- a dependency and indemnity compensation claim is filed in relation to a veteran with one or more service-connected disabilities who dies,
- the death certificate for the veteran identifies COVID-19 as the principal or contributory cause of death,
- the death certificate does not clearly identify any of the service-connected disabilities as the principal or contributory cause of death,
- the veteran's service-connected disability includes a condition more likely to cause severe illness from COVID-19,
- the claimant is not entitled to certain dependency and indemnity compensation benefits, and
- the evidence to support the claim does not result in a preliminary finding in favor of the claimant.

The VA must provide information to veterans, their dependents, and veterans service organizations about applying for dependency and indemnity compensation when a veteran dies from COVID-19. Such information must be available through the VA's website and via other outreach mechanisms.

Actions Timeline

- **Jul 26, 2021:** Message on Senate action sent to the House.
- **Jul 26, 2021:** Received in the House.
- **Jul 26, 2021:** Held at the desk.
- **Jul 21, 2021:** Passed/agreed to in Senate: Passed Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent.(consideration: CR S5023; text: CR S5023)
- **Jul 21, 2021:** Passed Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent. (consideration: CR S5023; text: CR S5023)
- **Jun 24, 2021:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Reported by Senator Tester with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Without written report.
- **Jun 24, 2021:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 83.
- **May 26, 2021:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with an amendment favorably.
- **Apr 28, 2021:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held.
- **Jan 28, 2021:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jan 28, 2021:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.