

## 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

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### 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.