

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3256

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve outreach programs carried out by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for more fully informing veterans of benefits available to them under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 8, 1999

Mr. PASCRELL (for himself, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. SHOWS, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. BALDACCI, Mr. KLINK, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. COOK, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. STARK, Mr. BAIRD, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. ROTHMAN, Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut, Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA, Mr. COYNE, Mr. FROST, Mr. UNDERWOOD, Mr. OLVER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. OBEY, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. ROMERO-BARCELO, Mr. BARCIA, Mr. MOORE, Mr. GORDON, Mrs. THURMAN, Mr. TALENT, Mr. PHELPS, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. ENGLISH, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. FORBES, Ms. CARSON, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. VISCLOSKY, and Mr. HOYER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve outreach programs carried out by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for more fully informing veterans of benefits available to them under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Right to
3 Know Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAMS.**

5 (a) INFORMATION ON VETERANS BENEFITS.—Sec-
6 tion 7722(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

7 (1) by inserting “(1)” after “(c)”; and

8 (2) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(2) Whenever a veteran or dependent first applies
10 for any benefit under laws administered by the Secretary,
11 the Secretary shall provide to the veteran or dependent
12 information concerning eligibility for benefits and health
13 care services under programs administered by the Sec-
14 retary. For purposes of this paragraph, a request for bur-
15 ial or related benefits, including an application for life in-
16 surance proceeds, shall be treated by the Secretary as an
17 initial application for dependent’s benefits.

18 “(3) Information provided under this subsection shall
19 include information on how to apply for benefits for which
20 the veteran or dependent may be eligible, including infor-
21 mation about assistance available under subsection (d).

22 “(4) In the case of veterans or dependents who are
23 members of distinct beneficiary populations (such as sur-
24 vivors of veterans), the Secretary shall ensure that infor-
25 mation provided under this subsection includes specific in-
26 formation about benefits relating to that population.”.

1 (b) ANNUAL OUTREACH PLAN.—(1) Chapter 77 of
2 such title is amended by adding at the end the following
3 new section:

4 **“§ 7727. Annual outreach plan**

5 “(a) The Secretary shall prepare an annual plan for
6 the conduct of outreach activities under this subchapter.

7 The Secretary shall include in the annual plan—

8 “(1) efforts to identify veterans who are not
9 otherwise enrolled or registered with the Department
10 for benefits or services under programs administered
11 by the Secretary; and

12 “(2) provisions for informing veterans and de-
13 pendents of any changes in benefit programs or
14 health care eligibility.

15 “(b) In developing the annual plan, the Secretary
16 shall consult with the following:

17 “(1) Directors or other responsible officials of
18 veterans service organizations.

19 “(2) Directors or other responsible officials of
20 local education and training programs.

21 “(3) Representatives of veterans outreach pro-
22 grams.

23 “(4) Local veterans employment representa-
24 tives.

25 “(5) Business and professional organizations.

1 “(6) Other appropriate individuals or organiza-
2 tions that could assist veterans in adjusting to a
3 self-sufficient civilian life.

4 “(c) The annual report required by section 7726 of
5 this title shall include specific information concerning the
6 effectiveness of the outreach plan developed pursuant to
7 this section.”.

8 (2) The table of sections at the beginning of such
9 chapter is amended by adding at the end the following
10 new item:

“7727. Annual outreach plan.”.

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