

110TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6695

To amend title 38, United States Code, to conform the mileage reimbursement rates used under the beneficiary travel program administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the mileage reimbursement rates for Government employees on official business who use privately owned vehicles, to eliminate all deductibles under the beneficiary travel program, to ensure that all veterans can participate in the beneficiary travel program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 31, 2008

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota (for himself, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. HAYES, Mr. HILL, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. SPACE, Ms. SUTTON, and Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to conform the mileage reimbursement rates used under the beneficiary travel program administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the mileage reimbursement rates for Government employees on official business who use privately owned vehicles, to eliminate all deductibles under the beneficiary travel program, to ensure that all veterans can participate in the beneficiary travel program, and for other purposes.

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

3 **SECTION 2. VETERANS BENEFICIARY TRAVEL PROGRAM.**

4 (a) DETERMINATION OF MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT
5 RATE.—Subsection (g) of section 111 of title 38, United
6 States Code, is amended to read as follows:

7 “(g)(1) In determining the amount of any allowance
8 or reimbursement to be paid under this section, the Sec-
9 retary shall use the mileage reimbursement rates for the
10 use of privately owned vehicles by Government employees
11 on official business, as prescribed by the Administrator of
12 General Services under section 5707(b) of title 5.

13 “(2) Subject to the availability of appropriations to
14 carry out this section, the Secretary may modify the
15 amount of allowances or reimbursement to be paid under
16 this section using a mileage reimbursement rate in excess
17 of the rate prescribed under paragraph (1).

18 “(3)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the
19 Secretary shall not make payments under this section for
20 travel performed by a special mode of travel unless—

21 “(i) the travel by the special mode of travel is
22 medically required and is authorized by the Sec-
23 retary before the travel begins; or

24 “(ii) the travel by the special mode of travel is
25 in connection with a medical emergency of such a

1 nature that the delay incident to obtaining author-
2 ization from the Secretary to use that mode of travel
3 would have been hazardous to the person's life or
4 health.

5 “(B) In the case of travel by a person to or from
6 a Department facility by special mode of travel, the Sec-
7 retary may provide payment under this section to the pro-
8 vider of the transportation by special mode before deter-
9 mining the eligibility of such person for such payment if
10 the Secretary determines that providing such payment is
11 in the best interest of furnishing care and services. Such
12 a payment shall be made subject to subsequently recov-
13 ering from such person the amount of the payment if such
14 person is determined to have been ineligible for payment
15 for such travel.

16 “(4) In no event shall payment be provided under this
17 section—

18 “(A) to reimburse for the cost of travel by pri-
19 vately owned vehicle in any amount in excess of the
20 cost of such travel by public transportation unless—

21 “(i) public transportation is not reasonably
22 accessible or would be medically inadvisable, or

23 “(ii) the cost of such travel is not greater
24 than the cost of public transportation; and

1 “(B) in excess of the actual expense incurred by
2 the person claiming reimbursement, as certified in
3 writing by such person.”.

4 (b) ELIMINATION OF DEDUCTIONS.—Such section is
5 further amended by striking subsection (c).

6 (c) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS.—Subsection (b) of such
7 section is amended to read as follows:

8 “(b) With respect to any fiscal year, if the Secretary
9 exercises the authority provided by subsection (a) to make
10 payments, the Secretary shall make the payments avail-
11 able to or for all persons eligible for examination, treat-
12 ment, care, rehabilitation, or counseling described in sub-
13 section (a).”.

14 (d) IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.—Not later than 14
15 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
16 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Com-
17 mittee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Com-
18 mittee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representa-
19 tives a report containing an estimate of the additional
20 costs incurred by the Department of Veterans Affairs be-
21 cause of the amendments made by this section.

22 (e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
23 this section shall apply with respect to travel expenses in-

1 curred after the expiration of the 90-day period that be-
2 gins on the date of the enactment of this Act.

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