

Senate bill

Section 205 of the Senate bill would restore the one-year time limit on the receipt of information or evidence necessary to complete an application following notification by the Secretary. It would also eliminate the existing one-year time limit on information or evidence necessary to substantiate a claim based on a completed or substantially complete application.

MODIFICATION OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF CHANGE IN RECURRING INCOME FOR PENSION PURPOSES

Current law

Section 5112(b)(4) of title 38, United States code, requires VA pensions be reduced or discontinued effective the first day of the month following the month in which the pensioner's net income is reported to have increased.

House bill

The House bills contain no comparable provision.

Senate bill

Section 206 of the Senate bill would modify the effective date of reduction or discontinuation of compensation or pension by reason of a change in recurring income to the first day of the year following the year in which the pensioner's net income is reported to have changed.

PAYMENT OF INSURANCE PROCEEDS TO AN ALTERNATE BENEFICIARY WHEN FIRST BENEFICIARY CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED

Current law

Under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code, there is no time limitation for a first-named beneficiary of a National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) or a United States Government Life Insurance (USGLI) policy to file a claim for proceeds. As a result, when the insured dies and the beneficiary does not file a claim, VA is required to hold the unclaimed funds indefinitely in order to honor any possible future claims by that beneficiary. VA is not permitted to pay the proceeds to an alternate beneficiary unless VA can determine that the first beneficiary predeceased the policyholder.

House bill

Section 401 of H.R. 2540 would grant the Secretary of Veterans Affairs the authority to authorize payment of NSLI or USGLI proceeds to an alternate beneficiary when the proceeds have not been claimed by the first-named beneficiary within three years following the death of the policyholder. If no beneficiary has filed a claim within five years of the veteran's death, benefits could be paid to such person as the Secretary determines is equitably entitled to the proceeds of the policy.

Senate bill

The Senate bill contains no comparable provision.

EXTENSION OF COPAYMENT REQUIREMENT FOR OUTPATIENT PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Current law

Section 1722A(c) of title 38, United States Code, furnishes the Secretary the authority, through September 30, 2002, to require a copayment of \$2 for each 30-day supply of medication VA furnishes a veteran on an outpatient basis for the treatment of a non-service connected disability or condition.

House bill Section 402 of H.R. 2540 would extend until September 30, 2006, the authority of the Secretary to require a \$2 copayment for each 30-day supply of medication.

Senate bill

The Senate bill contains no comparable provision.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH SERVICES IMPROVEMENT FUND MADE SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATIONS

House bill

Section 403 of H.R. 2540 would amend section 1729B of title 38, United States Code, by making the availability of funds in the VA's Health Services Improvement Fund subject to the provisions of appropriations acts effective October 1, 2001.

Senate bill

The Senate bill contains no comparable provision.

PILOT PROGRAM FOR EXPANSION OF TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE ACCESS TO VETERANS SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

Current law

VA provides various toll-free automated telephone response systems for veterans to furnish them information on VA benefits and services.

House bill

Section 407 of H.R. 2540 would establish a two-year nationwide pilot program to test the benefit and cost effectiveness of expanding current access to VA veterans service representatives through a toll-free telephone number. Under the pilot program, the Secretary would be required to expand the available hours of such access to veterans service representatives to not less than twelve hours on each regular business day across U.S. time zones and not less than six hours on Saturday. The pilot would also require that such service representatives have available to them information about veterans benefits provided by all other federal departments and agencies, and state governments.

Senate bill

The Senate bill contains no comparable provision.

CODIFICATION OF RECURRING PROVISIONS IN ANNUAL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACTS

Current law

Each year the Congress appropriates funds to the Department of Veterans Affairs as part of the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, Independent Agencies Appropriations Act. Although the amount of the appropriations varies from year to year, the purposes for which appropriations are made are generally fixed, and change little, if any, from year to year.

House bill

Section 409 of H.R. 2540 would codify recurring provisions in annual Department of Veterans Affairs Appropriations Acts.

Senate bill

The Senate bill contains no comparable provision.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2001

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Friday, December 14; that immediately following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate resume consideration of the farm bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there will be no rollcall votes tomorrow. The next rollcall votes will occur on Tuesday, December 18, at approximately 11 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 9:08 p.m., adjourned until Friday, December 14, 2001, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate December 13, 2001:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOHN MAGAW, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION FOR SECURITY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS. (NEW POSITION)

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

ROBERT B. HOLLAND, III, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS, VICE MICHAEL MAREK, TERM EXPIRED.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

ANDREA G. BARTHWELL, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEMAND REDUCTION, OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY, VICE FRED W. GARCIA, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

NEHEMIAH FLOWERS, OF MISSISSIPPI, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE EISENHOWER DURR.

ARTHUR JEFFREY HEDDEN, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JOSEPH CLYDE FOWLER, JR.

DAVID GLENN JOLLEY, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE WESLEY JOE WOOD.

DENNIS CLUFF MERRILL, OF OREGON, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE REGINALD B. MADSEN, RESIGNED.

MICHAEL WADE ROACH, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE PATRICK J. WILKERSON.

ERIC EUGENE ROBERTSON, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ROSA MARIA MELENDEZ, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 13, 2001:

THE JUDICIARY

WILLIAM P. JOHNSON, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO.

FREDERICK J. MARTONE, OF ARIZONA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA.

CLAY D. LAND, OF GEORGIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA.