

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 7337

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 18, 2022

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs

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## AN ACT

To require the Archivist of the United States to submit a plan to Congress to eliminate the records backlog at the National Personnel Records Center, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2       This Act may be cited as the “Access for Veterans  
3 to Records Act of 2022”.

4 **SEC. 2. PLAN TO ELIMINATE RECORDS BACKLOG AT THE**  
5 **NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER.**

6       (a) **PLAN REQUIRED.**—Not later than 60 days after  
7 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Archivist of the  
8 United States shall submit to the appropriate congres-  
9 sional committees a comprehensive plan for reducing the  
10 backlog of requests for records from the National Per-  
11 sonnel Records Center and improving the efficiency and  
12 responsiveness of operations at the National Personnel  
13 Records Center, that includes, at a minimum, the fol-  
14 lowing:

15           (1) An estimate of the number of backlogged  
16 record requests for veterans.

17           (2) Target timeframes to reduce the backlog.

18           (3) A detailed plan for using existing funds to  
19 improve the information technology infrastructure,  
20 including secure access to appropriate agency Fed-  
21 eral records, to prevent future backlogs.

22           (4) Actions to improve customer service for re-  
23 questers.

24           (5) Measurable goals with respect to the com-  
25 prehensive plan and metrics for tracking progress  
26 toward such goals.

1           (6) Strategies to prevent future record request  
2           backlogs, including backlogs caused by an event that  
3           prevents employees of the Center from reporting to  
4           work in person.

5           (b) UPDATES.—Not later than 90 days after the date  
6           on which the comprehensive plan is submitted under sub-  
7           section (a), and biannually thereafter until the response  
8           rate by the National Personnel Records Center reaches 90  
9           percent of all requests in 20 days or less, not including  
10          any request involving a record damaged or lost in the Na-  
11          tional Personnel Records Center fire of 1973 or any re-  
12          quest that is subject to a fee that has not been paid in  
13          a timely manner by the requestor (provided the National  
14          Personnel Records Center issues an invoice within 20 days  
15          after the date on which the request is made), the Archivist  
16          of the United States shall submit to the appropriate con-  
17          gressional committees an update of such plan that—

18                (1) describes progress made by the National  
19                Personnel Records Center during the preceding 90-  
20                day period with respect to record request backlog re-  
21                duction and efficiency and responsiveness improve-  
22                ment;

23                (2) provides data on progress made toward the  
24                goals identified in the comprehensive plan; and

1           (3) describes any changes made to the com-  
2       prehensive plan.

3       (c) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—In carrying out  
4       subsections (a) and (b), the Archivist of the United States  
5       shall consult with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

6       (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES  
7       DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-  
8       gressional committees” means—

9           (1) the Committee on Oversight and Reform  
10       and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the  
11       House of Representatives; and

12          (2) the Committee on Homeland Security and  
13       Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Vet-  
14       erans’ Affairs of the Senate.

15       **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS RECORDS**  
16               **BACKLOG.**

17       (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addi-  
18       tion to amounts otherwise available, there is authorized  
19       to be appropriated to the National Archives and Records  
20       Administration, \$60,000,000 to address backlogs in re-  
21       sponding to requests from veterans for military personnel  
22       records, improve cybersecurity, improve digital preserva-  
23       tion and access to archival Federal records, and address  
24       backlogs in requests made under section 552 of title 5,  
25       United States Code (commonly referred to as the Freedom

1 of Information Act). Such amounts may also be used for  
2 the Federal Records Center Program.

3 (b) REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN IN-PERSON STAFF-  
4 ING LEVELS.—Not later than 30 days after the date of  
5 the enactment of this Act, the Archivist of the United  
6 States shall ensure that the National Personnel Records  
7 Center maintains staffing levels and telework arrange-  
8 ments that enable the maximum processing of records re-  
9 quests possible in order to achieve the performance goal  
10 of responding to 90 percent of all requests in 20 days or  
11 less, not including any request involving a record damaged  
12 or lost in the National Personnel Records Center fire of  
13 1973 or any request that is subject to a fee that has not  
14 been paid in a timely manner by the requestor (provided  
15 the National Personnel Records Center issues an invoice  
16 within 20 days after the date on which the request is  
17 made).

18 (c) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORTING.—The Inspec-  
19 tor General for the National Archives and Records Admin-  
20 istration shall, for two years following the date of the en-  
21 actment of this Act, include in every semiannual report  
22 submitted to Congress pursuant to the Inspector General  
23 Act of 1978, a detailed summary of—

24 (1) efforts taken by the National Archives and  
25 Records Administration to address the backlog of

1 records requests at the National Personnel Records  
2 Center; and

3 (2) any recommendations for action proposed  
4 by the Inspector General related to reducing the  
5 backlog of records requests at the National Per-  
6 sonnel Records Center and the status of compliance  
7 with those recommendations by the National Ar-  
8 chives and Records Administration.

Passed the House of Representatives July 14, 2022.

Attest: CHERYL L. JOHNSON,  
*Clerk.*