

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4816

To require the Archivist of the United States to submit to Congress a comprehensive plan for reducing the backlog of requests for records from the National Personnel Records Center, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. BRAUN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To require the Archivist of the United States to submit to Congress a comprehensive plan for reducing the backlog of requests for records from 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

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

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

12 (1) The number and percentage of unresolved
13 veteran record requests that have been pending for
14 more than—

15 (A) 20 days;

16 (B) 90 days; and

17 (C) one year.

18 (2) Target timeframes to eliminate the backlog.

19 (3) A detailed plan for using existing funds to
20 improve information technology infrastructure, in-
21 cluding secure access to appropriate agency Federal
22 records, to prevent future backlogs.

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

1 (5) Measurable goals with respect to the com-
2 prehensive plan and metrics for tracking progress
3 toward such goals.

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

8 (b) UPDATES.—Not later than 90 days after the date
9 on which the comprehensive plan is submitted under sub-
10 section (a), and semiannually thereafter until the National
11 Personnel Records Center resolves 90 percent of all re-
12 quests for separation documents (other than documents
13 subject to fees or involving records damaged or lost in the
14 1973 fire) in 20 days or less, the Archivist of the United
15 States shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
16 mittees an update of such plan that—

17 (1) describes progress made by the National
18 Personnel Records Center during the preceding 180-
19 day period with respect to record request backlog re-
20 duction and efficiency and responsiveness improve-
21 ment;

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

24 (3) describes any changes made to the com-
25 prehensive plan.

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

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

7 (1) the Committee on Homeland Security and
8 Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Vet-
9 erans’ Affairs of the Senate; and

10 (2) the Committee on Oversight and Reform
11 and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
12 House of Representatives.

13 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL FUNDING.**

14 In addition to amounts otherwise available, there is
15 authorized to be appropriated to the National Archives
16 and Records Administration, \$20,000,000 to address
17 backlogs in responding to requests from veterans for mili-
18 tary personnel records.

19 **SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL STAFFING.**

20 Not later than 30 days after the date of the enact-
21 ment of this Act, the Archivist of the United States shall
22 ensure that the National Personnel Records Center main-
23 tains staffing levels that enable the maximum processing
24 of records requests possible in order to achieve the per-
25 formance goal of responding to 90 percent of all requests

1 for separation documents (other than documents subject
2 to fees or involving records damaged or lost in the 1973
3 fire) serviced in 20 days or less.

4 **SEC. 5. ADDITIONAL REPORTING.**

5 The Inspector General for the National Archives and
6 Records Administration shall, for two years following the
7 date of the enactment of this Act, include in every semi-
8 annual report submitted to Congress pursuant to the In-
9 spector General Act of 1978, a detailed summary of—

10 (1) efforts taken by the National Archives and
11 Records Administration to address the backlog of
12 records requests at the National Personnel Records
13 Center; and

14 (2) any recommendations for action proposed
15 by the Inspector General related to reducing the
16 backlog of records requests at the National Per-
17 sonnel Records Center and the status of compliance
18 with those recommendations by the National Ar-
19 chives and Records Administration.

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