

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 405

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 SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 27, 2001

Mr. TORRICELLI (for himself, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. MILLER, and Mr. CORZINE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Right to
5 Know Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAMS.**

2 (a) INFORMATION ON VETERANS BENEFITS.—Section 7722(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 **“§ 7727. Annual outreach plan**

2 “(a) ANNUAL PLAN REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall
3 prepare an annual plan for the conduct of outreach activi-
4 ties under this subchapter. The Secretary shall include in
5 the annual plan—

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

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

13 “(b) CONSULTATION.—In developing the annual
14 plan, the Secretary shall consult with the following:

15 “(1) Directors or other responsible officials of
16 veterans service organizations.

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

19 “(3) Representatives of veterans outreach pro-
20 grams.

21 “(4) Local veterans employment representa-
22 tives.

23 “(5) Business and professional organizations.

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

1 “(c) REPORT ON EFFECTIVENESS.—The annual re-
2 port required by section 7726 of this title shall include
3 specific information concerning the effectiveness of the
4 outreach plan developed pursuant to this section.”.

5 (2) The table of sections at the beginning of such
6 chapter is amended by adding at the end the following
7 new item:

“7727. Annual outreach plan.”.

