

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2566

To amend title II of the Social Security Act to phase out the 24-month waiting period for disabled individuals to become eligible for medicare benefits, to eliminate the waiting period for individuals with life-threatening conditions, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 23 (legislative day, JUNE 22), 2004

Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. DAYTON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To amend title II of the Social Security Act to phase out the 24-month waiting period for disabled individuals to become eligible for medicare benefits, to eliminate the waiting period for individuals with life-threatening conditions, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Ending the Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act of
6 2004”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Phase out of waiting period for medicare disability benefits.
- Sec. 3. Elimination of waiting period for individuals with life-threatening conditions.
- Sec. 4. Institute of medicine study and report on delay and prevention of disability conditions.

**SEC. 2. PHASE OUT OF WAITING PERIOD FOR MEDICARE
DISABILITY BENEFITS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 226(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 426(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “, and has for 24 calendar months been entitled to,” and inserting “, and for the waiting period (as defined in subsection (k)) has been entitled to,”;

(2) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking “, and has been for not less than 24 months,” and inserting “, and has been for the waiting period (as defined in subsection (k)),”;

(3) in paragraph (2)(C)(ii), by striking “, including the requirement that he has been entitled to the specified benefits for 24 months,” and inserting “, including the requirement that the individual has been entitled to the specified benefits for the waiting period (as defined in subsection (k)),”;

(4) in the flush matter following paragraph (2)(C)(ii)(II)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking “for each month beginning with the later of (I) July 1973 or (II) the twenty-fifth month of his entitlement or status as a qualified railroad retirement beneficiary described in paragraph (2), and” and inserting “for each month beginning after the waiting period (as so defined) for which the individual satisfies paragraph (2) and”;

(B) in the second sentence, by striking “the ‘twenty-fifth month of his entitlement’ refers to the first month after the twenty-fourth month of entitlement to specified benefits referred to in paragraph (2)(C) and”; and

(C) in the third sentence, by striking “, but not in excess of 78 such months”.

(b) SCHEDULE FOR PHASE OUT OF WAITING PERIOD.—Section 226 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 426) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(k) For purposes of subsection (b) (and for purposes of section 1837(g)(1) of this Act and section 7(d)(2)(ii) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974), the term ‘waiting period’ means—

“(1) for 2005, 18 months;

1 “(2) for 2006, 16 months;
 2 “(3) for 2007, 14 months;
 3 “(4) for 2008, 12 months;
 4 “(5) for 2009, 10 months;
 5 “(6) for 2010, 8 months;
 6 “(7) for 2011, 6 months;
 7 “(8) for 2012, 4 months;
 8 “(9) for 2013, 2 months; and
 9 “(10) for 2014 and each subsequent year, 0
 10 months.”.

11 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

12 (1) SUNSET.—Effective January 1, 2014, sub-
 13 section (f) of section 226 of the Social Security Act
 14 (42 U.S.C. 426) is repealed.

15 (2) MEDICARE DESCRIPTION.—Section 1811(2)
 16 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395c(2)) is amended by
 17 striking “entitled for not less than 24 months” and
 18 inserting “entitled for the waiting period (as defined
 19 in section 226(k))”.

20 (3) MEDICARE COVERAGE.—Section 1837(g)(1)
 21 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395p(g)(1)) is amended by
 22 striking “of the later of (A) April 1973 or (B) the
 23 third month before the 25th month of such entitle-
 24 ment” and inserting “of the third month before the

1 first month following the waiting period (as defined
2 in section 226(k)) applicable under section 226(b)”.

3 (4) RAILROAD RETIREMENT SYSTEM.—Section
4 7(d)(2)(ii) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974
5 (45 U.S.C. 231f(d)(2)(ii)) is amended—

6 (A) by striking “, for not less than 24
7 months” and inserting “, for the waiting period
8 (as defined in section 226(k) of the Social Secu-
9 rity Act); and

10 (B) by striking “could have been entitled
11 for 24 calendar months, and” and inserting
12 “could have been entitled for the waiting period
13 (as defined in section 226(k) of the Social Secu-
14 rity Act), and”.

15 (d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in sub-
16 section (c)(1), the amendments made by this section shall
17 apply to insurance benefits under title XVIII of the Social
18 Security Act with respect to items and services furnished
19 in months beginning at least 90 days after the date of
20 the enactment of this Act.

21 **SEC. 3. ELIMINATION OF WAITING PERIOD FOR INDIVID-**
22 **UALS WITH LIFE-THREATENING CONDITIONS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 226(h) of the Social Secu-
24 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 426(h)) is amended—

1 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), and
2 (3) as subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), respectively;
3 (2) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)
4 (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by inserting
5 “(1)” after “(h)”;

6 (3) in paragraph (1) (as designated by para-
7 graph (2))—

8 (A) in the matter preceding subparagraph
9 (A) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by in-
10 serting “or any other life-threatening condition
11 identified by the Secretary” after “amyotrophic
12 lateral sclerosis (ALS)”;

13 (4) in subparagraph (B) (as redesignated by
14 paragraph (1)), by striking “(rather than twenty-
15 fifth month)”;

16 (5) by adding at the end the following new
17 paragraph:

18 “(2) For purposes of identifying life-threatening con-
19 ditions under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall compile
20 a list of conditions that are fatal without medical treat-
21 ment. In compiling such list, the Secretary shall consult
22 with the Director of the National Institutes of Health (in-
23 cluding the Office of Rare Diseases), the Director of the
24 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Director

1 of the National Science Foundation, and the Institute of
 2 Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.”.

3 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
 4 this section shall apply to insurance benefits under title
 5 XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to items and
 6 services furnished in months beginning at least 90 days
 7 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

8 **SEC. 4. INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE STUDY AND REPORT ON**
 9 **DELAY AND PREVENTION OF DISABILITY**
 10 **CONDITIONS.**

11 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Health and Human
 12 Services (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”)
 13 shall request that the Institute of Medicine of the National
 14 Academy of Sciences conduct a study on the range of dis-
 15 ability conditions that can be delayed or prevented if indi-
 16 viduals receive access to health care services and coverage
 17 before the condition reaches disability levels.

18 (b) REPORT.—Not later than the date that is 2 years
 19 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall
 20 submit to Congress a report containing the results of the
 21 Institute of Medicine study authorized under this section.

22 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
 23 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
 24 \$750,000 for the period of fiscal years 2005 and 2006.

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