

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2638

To amend title 38, United States Code, to require an annual plan on outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 12, 2004

Mr. COLEMAN 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 require an annual plan on outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 “Veterans Benefits Out-
5 reach Act of 2004”.

6 **SEC. 2. ANNUAL PLAN ON OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.**

7 (a) ANNUAL PLAN REQUIRED.—Subchapter II of
8 chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by
9 inserting after section 523 the following new section:

1 **“§ 523A. Annual plan on outreach activities**

2 “(a) ANNUAL PLAN REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall
3 prepare each year a plan for the outreach activities of the
4 Department for the following year.

5 “(b) ELEMENTS.—Each annual plan under sub-
6 section (a) shall include the following:

7 “(1) Plans for efforts to identify veterans who
8 are not enrolled or registered with the Department
9 for benefits or services under the programs adminis-
10 tered by the Secretary.

11 “(2) Plans for informing veterans and their de-
12 pendents of modifications of the benefits and serv-
13 ices under the programs administered by the Sec-
14 retary, including eligibility for medical and nursing
15 care and services.

16 “(c) COORDINATION IN DEVELOPMENT.—In devel-
17 oping an annual plan under subsection (a), the Secretary
18 shall consult with the following:

19 “(1) Directors or other appropriate officials of
20 organizations recognized by the Secretary under sec-
21 tion 5902 of this title.

22 “(2) Directors or other appropriate officials of
23 State and local education and training programs.

24 “(3) Representatives of non-governmental orga-
25 nizations that carry out veterans outreach programs.

1 “(4) Representatives of State and local veterans
2 employment organizations.

3 “(5) Businesses and professional organizations.

4 “(6) Other individuals and organizations that
5 assist veterans in adjusting to civilian life.

6 “(d) INCORPORATION OF ASSESSMENT OF PREVIOUS
7 ANNUAL PLANS.—In developing an annual plan under
8 subsection (a), the Secretary shall take into account the
9 lessons learned from the implementation of previous an-
10 nual plans under such subsection.”.

11 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
12 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
13 after the item relating to section 523 the following new
14 item:

“523A. Annual plan on outreach activities.”.

15 **SEC. 3. APPEAL OF CLAIMS DENIED BECAUSE OF LOSS OF**
16 **RECORDS RESULTING FROM 1973 FIRE AT**
17 **THE NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CEN-**
18 **TER.**

19 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop and
20 implement procedures by which veterans may appeal
21 claims denied by the Secretary on the basis that records
22 destroyed in the 1973 fire at the National Personnel
23 Records Center could substantiate such claims.

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