

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2951

To require reports on the progress of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in addressing causes for variances in compensation payments for veterans for service-connected disabilities.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 1, 2008

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. LUGAR) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require reports on the progress of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in addressing causes for variances in compensation payments for veterans for service-connected disabilities.

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. REPORTS ON PROGRESS OF THE SECRETARY**
2 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN ADDRESSING**
3 **CAUSES FOR VARIANCES IN COMPENSATION**
4 **PAYMENTS FOR VETERANS FOR SERVICE-**
5 **CONNECTED DISABILITIES.**

6 (a) **REPORTS REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every year
8 thereafter through 2012, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
9 shall submit to the congressional veterans affairs commit-
10 tees a report describing the progress of the Secretary in
11 addressing the causes of variances in compensation pay-
12 ments for veterans for service-connected disabilities.

13 (b) **ELEMENTS.**—Each report under subsection (a)
14 shall include the following:

15 (1) A description of the efforts of the Veterans
16 Benefits Administration to coordinate with the Vet-
17 erans Health Administration to improve the quality
18 of examinations of veterans with service-connected
19 disabilities that are performed by the Veterans
20 Health Administration and contract clinicians, in-
21 cluding efforts relating to the use of approved tem-
22 plates for such examinations and of reports on such
23 examinations that are based on such templates pre-
24 pared in an easily-readable format.

25 (2) An assessment of the current personnel re-
26 quirements of the Veterans Benefits Administration,

1 including an assessment of the adequacy of the num-
2 ber of personnel assigned to each regional office of
3 the Administration for each type of claim adjudica-
4 tion position.

5 (3) A description of the differences, if any, in
6 current patterns of submittal rate of claims to the
7 Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding service-con-
8 nected disabilities among various populations of vet-
9 erans, including veterans living in rural and highly
10 rural areas, minority veterans, veterans who served
11 in the National Guard or Reserve, and veterans who
12 are retired from the Armed Forces military retirees,
13 and a description and assessment of efforts under-
14 taken to eliminate such differences.

15 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 (1) The term “congressional veterans affairs
17 committees” means—

18 (A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of
19 the Senate; and

20 (B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of
21 the House of Representatives.

22 (2) HIGHLY RURAL.—The term “highly rural”,
23 in the case of an area, means that the area consists

- 1 of a county or counties having a population of less
- 2 than seven persons per square mile.

