

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5881

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide certain employees of Members of Congress and certain employees of local governmental agencies with access to case-tracking information of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 31, 2012

Mr. RUNYAN (for himself and Mr. WALZ of Minnesota) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide certain employees of Members of Congress and certain employees of local governmental agencies with access to case-tracking information of the Department 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 “Access to Veterans
5 Benefits Improvement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROVISION OF ACCESS TO CASE-TRACKING INFOR-**
2 **MATION.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 59 of title 38, United
4 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
5 lowing:

6 **“§ 5906. Provision of access to case-tracking informa-**
7 **tion**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary shall provide
9 a covered employee with access to the case-tracking system
10 to provide a veteran with information regarding the status
11 of a claim submitted by such veteran, regardless of wheth-
12 er such employee is acting under a power of attorney exe-
13 cuted by such veteran.

14 “(2) In providing a covered employee with access to
15 the case-tracking system under paragraph (1), the Sec-
16 retary shall ensure that such access—

17 “(A) is provided in a manner that does not
18 allow such employee to modify the data contained in
19 such system; and

20 “(B) does not include access to medical records.

21 “(b) TREATMENT OF DISCLOSURE.—The access to
22 information by a covered employee pursuant to subsection
23 (a) shall be deemed to be—

24 “(1) a covered disclosure under section 552a(b)
25 of title 5; and

1 “(2) a permitted disclosure under regulations
2 promulgated under section 264(c) of the Health In-
3 surance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
4 (42 U.S.C. 1320d–2 note).

5 “(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

6 “(1) The term ‘case-tracking system’ means the
7 system of the Department of Veterans Affairs that
8 provides information regarding the status of a claim
9 submitted by a veteran.

10 “(2) The term ‘covered employee’ means an em-
11 ployee of a Member of Congress or an employee of
12 a State or local governmental agency (including a
13 veterans service officer) who, in the course of car-
14 rying out the responsibilities of such employment,
15 assists veterans with claims for any benefit under
16 the laws administered by the Secretary.”.

17 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
18 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding
19 at the end the following new item:

 “5906. Provision of access to case-tracking information.”.

