

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 963

To provide for free mailing privileges for personal correspondence and parcels sent to members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, or other designated hostile fire areas.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 7, 2017

Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. DEFazio, Ms. MOORE, Mr. JONES, Ms. ESTY, and Mr. MCGOVERN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To provide for free mailing privileges for personal correspondence and parcels sent to members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, or other designated hostile fire areas.

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 “Supply Our Soldiers
5 Act of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. POSTAL BENEFITS PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS OF**
2 **THE ARMED FORCES.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense, in con-
4 sultation with the United States Postal Service, shall pro-
5 vide for a program under which postal benefits shall be
6 provided to qualified individuals in accordance with suc-
7 ceeding provisions of this Act.

8 (b) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this
9 Act, the term “qualified individual” means an individual
10 who—

11 (1) is a member of the Armed Forces of the
12 United States on active duty (as defined in section
13 101 of title 10, United States Code); and

14 (2)(A) is serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, or other
15 designated hostile fire area, as described in section
16 351(a)(1) of title 37, United States Code; or

17 (B) is hospitalized at a facility under the juris-
18 diction of the Armed Forces of the United States as
19 a result of a disease or injury incurred as a result
20 of service described in subparagraph (A).

21 (c) POSTAL BENEFITS DESCRIBED.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The postal benefits provided
23 under this Act shall consist of such coupons or other
24 similar evidence of credit (whether in printed, elec-
25 tronic, or other format, and in this Act referred to
26 as “vouchers”) as the Secretary of Defense (in con-

1 sultation with the Postal Service) shall determine,
2 entitling the bearer or user to make qualified mail-
3 ings free of postage.

4 (2) QUALIFIED MAILING.—For purposes of this
5 Act, the term “qualified mailing” means the mailing
6 of a single mail piece which—

7 (A) is described in subparagraph (A) or
8 (B) of paragraph (3);

9 (B) is sent from within an area served by
10 a United States post office; and

11 (C) is addressed to a qualified individual.

12 (3) MAIL DESCRIBED.—Mail described in this
13 paragraph is—

14 (A) any first-class mail (including any
15 sound- or video-recorded communication) not
16 exceeding 13 ounces in weight and having the
17 character of personal correspondence; and

18 (B) parcel post not exceeding 15 pounds in
19 weight.

20 (4) LIMITATIONS.—

21 (A) NUMBER.—An individual shall be eligi-
22 ble for 1 voucher for each month in which such
23 individual is a qualified individual.

24 (B) USE.—Any such voucher may not be
25 used—

1 (i) for more than a single qualified
2 mailing; or

3 (ii) beyond the expiration date of such
4 voucher, as designated by the Secretary of
5 Defense.

6 (5) COORDINATION RULE.—Postal benefits
7 under this Act shall be in addition to, and not in lieu
8 of, any reduced rates of postage or other similar
9 benefits which might otherwise be available by or
10 under law, including any rates of postage resulting
11 from the application of section 3401(b) of title 39,
12 United States Code.

13 (d) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 30 days after the
14 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense
15 (in consultation with the Postal Service) shall prescribe
16 any regulations necessary to carry out this Act, includ-
17 ing—

18 (1) procedures by which vouchers will be pro-
19 vided or made available in a timely manner to per-
20 sons duly identified by qualified individuals to re-
21 ceive those vouchers; and

22 (2) procedures to ensure that the number of
23 vouchers provided or made available with respect to
24 any qualified individual complies with subsection
25 (c)(4)(A).

1 **SEC. 3. FUNDING.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
3 priated to the Department of Defense, for fiscal years
4 2018 through 2023, a sum determined by the Secretary
5 of Defense to be equal to the expenses incurred by the
6 Department in providing the benefits described in section
7 2(c) for such fiscal years. Such sum shall be derived from
8 amounts appropriated in each such fiscal year for Oper-
9 ation and Maintenance, Defense-wide, for the Office of the
10 Secretary of Defense, and shall not to exceed \$75 million
11 for the total period beginning with fiscal year 2018 and
12 ending with fiscal year 2023.

13 (b) TRANSFERS TO POSTAL SERVICE.—

14 (1) BASED ON ESTIMATES.—The Secretary of
15 Defense shall transfer to the Postal Service, out of
16 any amount so appropriated and in advance of each
17 calendar quarter during which postal benefits under
18 this Act may be used, an amount equal to the
19 amount of postal benefits that the Secretary of De-
20 fense estimates will be used during such quarter, re-
21 duced or increased (as the case may be) by any
22 amounts by which the Secretary finds that a deter-
23 mination under this section for a prior quarter was
24 greater than or less than the amount finally deter-
25 mined for such quarter.

1 (2) BASED ON ANNUAL DETERMINATION.—For
2 each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022, an an-
3 nual determination of the amount necessary to cor-
4 rect any previous determination under this section
5 during such fiscal year, and any transfer of amounts
6 between the Postal Service and the Department of
7 Defense based on that annual determination, shall
8 be made not later than 6 months after the end of
9 such fiscal year.

10 (3) BASED ON FINAL DETERMINATION.—A
11 final determination of the amount necessary to cor-
12 rect any previous determination under this section,
13 and any transfer of amounts between the Postal
14 Service and the Department of Defense based on
15 that final determination, shall be made not later
16 than 6 months after the end of fiscal year 2023.

17 (c) CONSULTATION REQUIRED.—All estimates and
18 determinations under this section of the amount of postal
19 benefits under this Act used in any period shall be made
20 by the Department of Defense in consultation with the
21 Postal Service.

1 **SEC. 4. DURATION.**

2 The postal benefits under this Act shall apply with
3 respect to mail matter sent during the period beginning
4 on October 1, 2017, and ending on September 30, 2023.

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