

“(aa) The Under Secretary for Benefits, the Under Secretary for Health, or the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

“(bb) The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration.

“(cc) The Director of the Office of Management or the Chief Financial Officer.

“(dd) The Assistant Secretary for Accountability and Whistleblower Protection.

“(ee) The General Counsel.

“(ff) Such other officers as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(ii) In the case of an employee of the Department employed in a Senior Executive Service position, or a position in another comparable system for senior-level Government employees, as defined by the Secretary, whose position is primarily at the Central Office of the Department, but who performs some portion of the employee's job function at other facilities of the Department, as defined by the Secretary, not at Central Office—

“(I) the employee shall not be considered described in subparagraph (A) with respect to the portion of the employee's job function that is based out of non-Central Office facilities of the Department; and

“(II) any critical skill incentive provided under paragraph (1) to the employee for the portion of the employee's job function that is based out of facilities of the Department other than the Central Office shall be proportionate to the time spent at those Department facilities.

“(C)(i) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Protecting Regular Order for Veterans Act of 2025, and not less frequently than once each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives an annual report on the employees of the Department employed in a Senior Executive Service position, or a position in another comparable system for senior-level Government employees, as defined by the Secretary, who were provided a critical skill incentive under paragraph (1).

“(ii) Reports submitted pursuant to clause (i) may be submitted by incorporating their contents into other congressionally mandated reports to the committees described in such clause.

“(D) In this paragraph, the term ‘Senior Executive Service position’ has the meaning given such term in section 3132(a) of title 5.”.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS EXPERIENCE OFFICE.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the “Improving Veterans' Experience Act of 2025”.

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 3 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 325. Veterans experience office

“(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in the Department within the Office of the Secretary an office to be known as the ‘Veterans Experience Office’ (in this section referred to as the ‘Office’).

“(b) **HEAD OF OFFICE.**—(1) The head of the Office shall be the Chief Veterans Experience Officer.

“(2) The Chief Veterans Experience Officer shall—

“(A) be appointed by the Secretary from among individuals the Secretary considers qualified to perform the duties of the position;

“(B) report directly to the Secretary; and

“(C) be responsible for carrying out the functions of the Office set forth under subsection (c).

“(c) **FUNCTION.**—The functions of the Office are as follows:

“(1) Carrying out the key customer experience initiatives of the Department relating to veterans' and other beneficiaries' satisfaction with and usage of benefits and services furnished under laws administered by the Secretary for which they are eligible, including setting the strategy, framework, policy, and other guidance for the Department relating to customer experience, including ensuring the activities of the Office and those of other organizations and offices within the Department are coordinated and not duplicative.

“(2) Requiring the heads of other organizations and offices within the Department to report regularly on customer experience metrics, action plans, and other customer experience improvement efforts to the Chief Veterans Experience Officer.

“(3) Collecting veteran-derived data—

“(A) to determine veteran and beneficiary satisfaction with and usage of the benefits and services furnished under laws administered by the Secretary for which they are eligible; and

“(B) to be considered during policymaking.

“(4) Providing strategic guidance and strategies to Department entities for engaging with veterans and beneficiaries regarding benefits and services furnished under laws administered by the Secretary, including those not using such benefits and services.

“(5) Assessing and advising the Secretary on the accuracy and helpfulness of the websites and other customer-facing information of the Department, be it available electronically or in any other format.

“(6) Assessing and advising the Secretary on the status and opportunities for improvement of the customer service efforts of the Department.

“(d) **REPORTS.**—(1) Each year, the Chief Veterans Experience Officer shall submit to the Secretary a summary of the data received by the Chief Veterans Experience Officer under subsection (c)(2).

“(2) Each year, not later than 180 days after the date on which the Secretary receives the summary under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to Congress an annual summary and analysis of the matters summarized pursuant to such paragraph.

“(3) Each annual summary submitted pursuant to paragraph (2) shall include the following:

“(A) Data regarding customer service and experience feedback, disaggregated by benefit or service furnished under laws administered by the Secretary, and relevant demographic data of the veterans and beneficiaries providing the feedback.

“(B) Data regarding veteran and beneficiary satisfaction with and usage of benefits or services, disaggregated by benefit or service furnished under laws administered by the Secretary, and relevant demographic data of the veterans and beneficiaries providing the feedback, including—

“(i) potential reasons for not using the benefits or services, such as—

“(I) eligibility;

“(II) lack of knowledge or awareness of existence of benefit or service;

“(III) barriers of technology, information, or time; and

“(IV) other related reasons; and

“(ii) an analysis of how such reasons may be addressed.

“(e) **STAFF AND RESOURCES.**—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that—

“(A) the Office has such staff, resources, and access to customer service and experience information as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Office; and

“(B) any information provided to the Office does not include personally identifiable information of an individual veteran, survivor, dependent, or other beneficiary unless such

individual provides appropriate consent to allow such information to be shared with the Office.

“(2) Funds available for basic pay and other administrative expenses of other Department organizations and offices may be available to reimburse the Office for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs for services provided to such organizations if the Secretary determines that contributing to such costs will not undermine the ability of any such organization or office to provide services required by such office.

“(3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize an increase in the number of full-time employees otherwise authorized for the Department.

“(f) **PRIVACY.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the Chief Veterans Experience Officer to disclose any record in contravention of section 552a of title 5 (commonly referred to as the ‘Privacy Act of 1974’).

“(g) **SUNSET.**—The requirements and authorities of this section shall terminate on September 30, 2028.”.

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 3 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“325. Veterans Experience Office.”.

(c) **COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES REVIEW OF VETERANS EXPERIENCE OFFICE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS.**—Not later than 540 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) complete an analysis of the methodology, effectiveness, and implementation of findings and feedback of veterans and beneficiaries used by the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the Veterans Experience Office, to improve veteran and beneficiary customer experience and satisfaction, including through the use of what are known as “trust-scores”, Veteran Signals also known as “VSignals”, and related survey and data collection activities, processes, and initiatives; and

(2) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth the findings of the Comptroller General with respect to the analysis completed pursuant to paragraph (1).

SA 2223. Ms. LUMMIS (for Mr. SHEEHY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 160, to amend the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 to reauthorize the sale by the Department of Defense of aircraft and parts for wildfire suppression purposes, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 3, line 3, strike “October 1, 2025,” and insert “the date of the enactment of the Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND
FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet in open session during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND
CAPABILITIES

The Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to receive testimony in open and closed session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

The Subcommittee on Seapower of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to receive testimony in open session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 8 a.m., to conduct a closed session.

PROTECTING REGULAR ORDER
FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2025

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 423 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 423) to protect regular order for budgeting for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Moran substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2222), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The bill (S. 423), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

AERIAL FIREFIGHTING
ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2025

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Armed Services Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 160, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 160) to amend the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 to reauthorize the sale by the Department of Defense of aircraft and parts for wildfire suppression purposes, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sheehy amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2223) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the period for exercise of authority for the sale by the Department of Defense of aircraft and parts for wildfire suppression purposes)

On page 3, line 3, strike "October 1, 2025," and insert "the date of the enactment of the Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025".

The bill (S. 160), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 160

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION AND REAUTHORIZATION
OF AUTHORITY FOR SALE BY DEPARTMENT
OF DEFENSE OF AIRCRAFT AND PARTS FOR
WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION PURPOSES.

Section 2 of the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-307; 10 U.S.C. 2576 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) by striking "a period" and inserting "the period"; and

(B) by inserting "or water" after "fire retardant";

(2) in subsection (b), by striking "sold under subsection (a)" and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting "sold under subsection (a) may be used only for the provision of aircraft services for wildfire suppression purposes.";

(3) in subsection (c), by inserting "or water" after "fire retardant";

(4) in subsection (d)(1), in the second sentence, by striking "subsection (a)(1)" and inserting "subsection (g)"; and

(5) by striking subsection (g) and inserting the following:

"(g) PERIOD FOR EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY.—The period specified in this subsection is the period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025 and ending on October 1, 2035."

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL
9, 2025

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 9; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; further, that at 11:30 a.m., the Senate proceed to executive session and execute the order of April 8 with respect to the Atkins and Huckabee nominations and the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Atkins nomination, and if cloture is invoked, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Huckabee nomination; further, that at 2 p.m., the Senate vote on confirmation of the Hoekstra, Johnson, and Cabrera nominations in the order listed; further, that at 7 p.m., the Senate vote on confirmation of the Atkins nomination; and following disposition of the Atkins nomination, Senator CRUZ be recognized to make a motion to proceed to Calendar No. 17, H.J. Res. 20; finally, if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.