

payable without interest from the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund in 3 equal installments, such installments to be paid on January 1 of each of the first 3 calendar years beginning after the retirement of the member (except that in special cases, the Secretary of State may accelerate or combine such installments); and

(2)(A) for those participants in the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System, a refund as provided in section 4055 of this title of the contributions made by the member to the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund, except that in lieu of such refund a member who has at least 5 years of service credit toward retirement under the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System (excluding military and naval service) may elect to receive an annuity, computed under section 4046 of this title, commencing at age 60; and (B) for those participants in the Foreign Service Pension System, benefits as provided in section 4071 of this title.

In the event that a member of the Service has elected to receive retirement benefits under paragraph (2) and dies before reaching age 60 (for participants in the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System) or age 62 (for participants in the Foreign Service Pension System), his or her death shall be considered a death in service within the meaning of section 4049 of this title.

(Pub. L. 96-465, title I, § 609, Oct. 17, 1980, 94 Stat. 2098; Pub. L. 103-236, title I, § 181(a)(3), Apr. 30, 1994, 108 Stat. 417; Pub. L. 105-277, div. G, subd. B, title XXIII, § 2312(a), Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2681-827.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1998—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 105-277, § 2312(a)(2), inserted “or section 4071d of this title, as appropriate” after “section 4046 of this title” in concluding provisions.

Subsec. (a)(2)(A). Pub. L. 105-277, § 2312(a)(1), inserted “or any other applicable provision of chapter 84 of title 5” after “section 4051 of this title”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 105-277, § 2312(a)(4), inserted “(for participants in the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System) or age 62 (for participants in the Foreign Service Pension System)” after “age 60” in concluding provisions.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 105-277, § 2312(a)(3), designated existing provisions as subpar. (A), inserted “for those participants in the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System,” before “a refund”, and added subpar. (B).

1994—Subsecs. (a)(2), (b). Pub. L. 103-236 inserted “or 4010a” after “4008(b)”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1998 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 105-277, div. G, subd. B, title XXIII, § 2312(c), Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2681-827, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section [amending this section and section 4071d of this title] shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 21, 1998].

“(2) EXCEPTIONS.—The amendments made by paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (a) and paragraphs (1)(A) and (2) of subsection (b) [amending this section and section 4071d of this title] shall apply with respect

to any actions taken under section 611 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 [22 U.S.C. 4010a] on or after January 1, 1996.”

SPECIAL ANNUITY FOR CERTAIN FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS

Pub. L. 95-105, title IV, § 411, Aug. 17, 1977, 91 Stat. 855, as amended by Pub. L. 95-426, title IV, § 412(b), Oct. 7, 1978, 92 Stat. 981, provided that:

“(a) Subject to the conditions established in subsection (b), any Foreign Service officer—

“(1) who was retired under section 633(a)(1) of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 [former section 1003(a)(1) of this title, see section 4007(a) of this title] before the date of enactment of this section, [Aug. 17, 1977];

“(2) who was not in class 1, 2, or 3 at the time of retirement;

“(3) who was 40 years of age or older at the time of retirement; and

“(4) who had at least 20 years of service, exclusive of credit for unused sick leave, creditable for purposes of section 821 of such Act [former section 1076 of this title, see section 4046 of this title] at the time of retirement;

shall be entitled to receive retirement benefits in accordance with the provisions of such section 821 [former section 1076 of this title, see section 4046 of this title] in lieu of any retirement benefits which the officer may be entitled to elect under section 634(b)(2) of such Act [former section 1004(b)(2) of this title, see subsec. (b)(2) of this section]. Such retirement benefits shall be paid from the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund and shall be effective on the date the officer reaches age 50, the date of enactment of this section [Aug. 17, 1977], or October 1, 1977, whichever date is latest.

“(b) Retirement benefits may not be paid under this section unless (1) any refund of contributions paid to the officer under section 634(b)(2) of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 [former section 1004(b)(2) of this title, see subsec. (b)(2) of this section] is repaid to the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund, with interest, in accordance with sections 811(d) and (f) of such Act [former section 1071(d) and (f) of this title, see section 4045(d) and (f) of this title]; and (2) the service forming the basis for such retirement benefits is not used as the basis for any other retirement benefits under any retirement system.

“(c) In the event that an officer who is entitled to retirement benefits under this section dies before reaching the age of fifty, but after the date of enactment of this section [Aug. 17, 1977], his or her death shall be considered a death in service within the meaning of section 832 of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 [former section 1082 of this title, see section 4049 of this title], except that no survivor's annuity (other than a survivor's annuity which would be payable under the first complete sentence in section 634(b)(2) of such Act [former section 1004(b)(2) of this title, see subsec. (b)(2) of this section] but for the enactment of this section) shall become effective before October 1, 1977.

“(d) An officer entitled to retirement benefits under this section may make the election described in section 821(b) or (f), as appropriate, of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 [former section 1076(b) or (f) of this title, see section 4046(b) and (f) of this title] at any time before reaching the age of fifty or before the end of the sixty-day period beginning on the date of enactment of this section [Aug. 17, 1977], whichever is later.”

§ 4010. Separation for cause; suspension

(a) Authorization of Secretary; right to hearing; attorneys fees and backpay; leave without pay

(1) The Secretary may separate any member from the Service for such cause as will promote the efficiency of the Service, including upon receiving notification from the Bureau of Diplo-

matic Security that such member has engaged in criminal misconduct, such as murder, rape, or other sexual assault.

(2)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), whenever the Secretary decides under paragraph (1) to separate, on the basis of misconduct, any member of the Service (other than a United States citizen employed under section 3951 of this title who is not a family member) who either—

- (i) is serving under a career appointment, or
- (ii) is serving under a limited appointment,

the member may not be separated from the Service until the member receives a hearing before the Foreign Service Grievance Board and the Board decides that cause for separation has been established, unless the member waives, in writing, the right to such a hearing, or the member's appointment has expired, whichever is sooner.

(B) The right to a hearing in subparagraph (A) does not apply in the case of an individual who has been convicted of a crime for which a sentence of imprisonment of more than one year may be imposed.

(3) If the Board decides that cause for separation has not been established, the Board may direct the Department to pay reasonable attorneys' fees to the extent and in the manner provided by section 4137(b)(5) of this title. The hearing provided under this paragraph shall be conducted in accordance with the hearing procedures applicable to grievances under section 4136 of this title and shall be in lieu of any other administrative procedure authorized or required by this or any other Act. Section 4140 of this title shall apply to proceedings under this paragraph.

(4) Notwithstanding the hearing required by paragraph (2), at the time that the Secretary decides to separate a member of the Service for cause, the member shall be placed on leave without pay. If the member does not waive the right to a hearing, and the Board decides that cause for separation has not been established, the member shall be reinstated with back pay.

(b) Refund of contributions to Fund; annuity election

Any participant in the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System who is separated under subsection (a) shall be entitled to receive a refund as provided in section 4055 of this title of the contributions made by the participant to the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund. Except in cases where the Secretary determines that separation was based in whole or in part on the ground of disloyalty to the United States, a participant who has at least 5 years of service credit toward retirement under the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System (excluding military and naval service) may elect, in lieu of such refund, to an annuity, computed under section 4046 of this title, commencing at age 60.

(c) Suspension

(1) In order to promote the efficiency of the Service, the Secretary may indefinitely suspend without duties a member of the Service when—

- (A) the member's security clearance is suspended; or

- (B) there is reasonable cause to believe that the member has committed a crime for which a sentence of imprisonment may be imposed.

(2) Any member of the Service for whom a suspension is proposed under this subsection shall be entitled to—

- (A) written notice stating the specific reasons for the proposed suspension;
- (B) a reasonable time to respond orally and in writing to the proposed suspension;
- (C) obtain at such member's own expense representation by an attorney or other representative; and
- (D) a final written decision, including the specific reasons for such decision, as soon as practicable.

(3) Any member suspended under this subsection may file a grievance in accordance with the procedures applicable to grievances under subchapter XI of this chapter.

(4) If a grievance is filed pursuant to paragraph (3)—

- (A) the review by the Foreign Service Grievance Board shall be limited to a determination of whether the provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) have been fulfilled; and
- (B) the Board may not exercise the authority provided under section 4136(8) of this title.

(5) For each member of the Service suspended under paragraph (1)(A) whose security clearance remains suspended for more than one calendar year, not later than 30 days after the end of such calendar year, the Secretary of State shall report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate in writing regarding the specific reasons relating to the duration of each such suspension.

(6) Any member of the Service suspended under this subsection may be suspended without pay only after a final written decision is provided to such member pursuant to paragraph (2).

(7) In this subsection, the term "reasonable time" means—

- (A) with respect to a member of the Service assigned to duty in the United States, 15 days after receiving notice of the proposed suspension; and
- (B) with respect to a member of the Service assigned to duty outside the United States, 30 days after receiving notice of the proposed suspension.

(Pub. L. 96-465, title I, §610, Oct. 17, 1980, 94 Stat. 2098; Pub. L. 100-204, title I, §181(d), Dec. 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 1364; Pub. L. 101-167, title V, §586(b), Nov. 21, 1989, 103 Stat. 1252; Pub. L. 101-246, title I, §143, Feb. 16, 1990, 104 Stat. 36; Pub. L. 102-138, title I, §143(a), Oct. 28, 1991, 105 Stat. 668; Pub. L. 103-415, §1(h)(2), Oct. 25, 1994, 108 Stat. 4300; Pub. L. 105-277, div. G, subdiv. B, title XXIII, §2313, Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2681-827; Pub. L. 106-113, div. B, §1000(a)(7) [div. A, title III, §328], Nov. 29, 1999, 113 Stat. 1536, 1501A-438; Pub. L. 107-228, div. A, title III, §314(a), Sept. 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 1378; Pub. L. 114-323, title IV, §415(a), Dec. 16, 2016, 130 Stat. 1933; Pub. L. 117-81, div. E, title LIII, §5317, Dec. 27, 2021, 135 Stat. 2367; Pub. L. 117-263, div. I, title XCII, §9202(b)(1), Dec. 23, 2022, 136 Stat. 3864; Pub. L. 118-159, div. G, title LXXV, §7504, Dec. 23, 2024, 138 Stat. 2546.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2024—Subsec. (c)(6). Pub. L. 118-159 substituted “this subsection” for “paragraph (1)(B)”.

2022—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 117-263 struck out “decide to” after “The Secretary may” and inserted before period at end “, including upon receiving notification from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security that such member has engaged in criminal misconduct, such as murder, rape, or other sexual assault”.

2021—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 117-81, §5317(1), substituted “indefinitely suspend without duties” for “suspend” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (c)(5), (6). Pub. L. 117-81, §5317(3), added pars. (5) and (6). Former par. (5) redesignated (7).

Subsec. (c)(7). Pub. L. 117-81, §5317(2), (4), redesignated par. (5) as (7), struck out subpar. (A) designation before “The term”, substituted “this subsection, the term” for “this subsection: The term”, redesignated cls. (i) and (ii) as subpars. (A) and (B), realigned margins, and struck out former subpar. (B) which read as follows: “The terms ‘suspend’ and ‘suspension’ mean placing a member of the Foreign Service in a temporary status without duties.”

2016—Pub. L. 114-323, §415(a)(1), substituted “Separation for cause; suspension” for “Separation for cause” in section catchline.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 114-323, §415(a)(2), added subsec. (c).

2002—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 107-228, §314(a)(1), inserted “decide to” after “may”.

Subsec. (a)(2) to (6). Pub. L. 107-228, §314(a)(2), (3), added pars. (2) to (4) and struck out former pars. (2) to (6) which related to the rights of members of the Service to hearings before the Foreign Service Grievance Board prior to being separated from the Service, suspensions from the Service pending final resolution of the underlying matter, procedural rights of suspended members, review of suspensions by the Board, and leave without pay pending final resolution for members recommended for separation.

1999—Subsec. (a)(6). Pub. L. 106-113 added par. (6).

1998—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 105-277, in first sentence, substituted “Except in the case of an individual who has been convicted of a crime for which a sentence of imprisonment of more than 1 year may be imposed, a member” for “A member”.

1994—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 103-415 inserted “(other than a United States citizen employed under section 3951 of this title who is not a family member)” after “A member of the Service”.

1991—Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 102-138, §143(a)(1), substituted “a member has been convicted of a crime” for “there is reasonable cause to believe that a member has committed a crime”.

Subsec. (a)(4)(A). Pub. L. 102-138, §143(a)(2), substituted “suspension” for “suspension, including the grounds for reasonable cause to believe a crime has been committed”.

Subsec. (a)(5). Pub. L. 102-138, §143(a)(3), substituted “the conviction requirements of subsection (a)(3) of this section have been fulfilled” for “there exists reasonable cause to believe a crime has been committed for which a sentence of imprisonment may be imposed”.

1990—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 101-246 inserted before period at end of first sentence “or, notwithstanding section 4136(8) of this title, unless the member has been convicted of a crime related to the cause for separation, subject to reinstatement with back pay (for any period during which separation for cause had not been established by such a hearing) if such conviction is reversed on appeal” and inserted sentence at end that section 4140 of this title apply to proceedings under this paragraph.

1989—Subsec. (a)(3) to (5). Pub. L. 101-167 added pars. (3) to (5).

1987—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 100-204 inserted after first sentence “If such cause is not established at such hear-

ing, the Grievance Board shall have the authority to direct the Department to pay reasonable attorneys fees to the extent and in the manner provided by section 4137(b)(5) of this title.”

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1987 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 100-204 not applicable with respect to any grievance in which the Board has issued a final decision pursuant to section 4137 of this title before Dec. 22, 1987, see section 181(e) of Pub. L. 100-204, set out as a note under section 3946 of this title.

UPDATE TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS MANUAL

Pub. L. 117-263, div. I, title XCII, §9202(b)(2), Dec. 23, 2022, 136 Stat. 3864, provided that: “The Director of Global Talent Management shall—

“(A) update the ‘Grounds for Disciplinary Action’ and ‘List of Disciplinary Offenses and Penalties’ sections of the Foreign Affairs Manual to reflect the amendments made under paragraph (1) [amending this section]; and

“(B) communicate such updates to Department [of State] staff through publication in Department Notices.”

EXPEDITED SEPARATION OUT

Pub. L. 105-277, div. G, subdiv. B, title XXIII, §2311(b), Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2681-826, provided that:

“(1) SEPARATION OF LOWEST RANKED FOREIGN SERVICE MEMBERS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act [Oct. 21, 1998], the Secretary of State shall develop and implement procedures to identify, and recommend for separation, any member of the Foreign Service ranked by promotion boards of the Department of State in the bottom 5 percent of his or her class for 2 or more of the 5 years preceding the date of enactment of this Act (in this subsection referred to as the ‘years of lowest ranking’) if the rating official for such member was not the same individual for any two of the years of lowest ranking.

“(2) SPECIAL INTERNAL REVIEWS.—In any case where the member was evaluated by the same rating official in any 2 of the years of lowest ranking, an internal review of the member’s file shall be conducted to determine whether the member should be considered for action leading to separation.

“(3) PROCEDURES.—The Secretary of State shall develop procedures for the internal reviews required under paragraph (2).”

DEFINITION OF “REASONABLE CAUSE”

Pub. L. 101-167, title V, §586(c), Nov. 21, 1989, 103 Stat. 1252, provided that for purposes of amendments by section 586(a) and (b) of Pub. L. 101-167, which amended this section and section 4136 of this title, reasonable cause to believe that a member has committed a crime for which a sentence of imprisonment may be imposed was to be defined as a member of the Service having been convicted of, and sentence of imprisonment having been imposed for, a job-related crime, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-138, title I, §143(c), Oct. 28, 1991, 105 Stat. 668.

§ 4010a. Reductions in force**(a) Authorization and regulations**

The Secretary may conduct reductions in force and shall prescribe regulations for the separation of members of the Service holding a career or career candidate appointment under subchapter III of this chapter, under such reductions in force which give due effect to the following:

(1) Organizational changes.

(2) Documented employee knowledge, skills, or competencies.