

“(a) IMPROVEMENT OF PROCESSES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall improve the processes and procedures of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to identifying, locating, and paying hard-to-find beneficiaries of life insurance policies issued under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code, including by—

“(1) improving the search tools available on the website of the Department;

“(2) conducting outreach to veterans, veterans service organizations, and the general public with respect to such search tools;

“(3) improving the processes for searching for information relating to potential recipients through internal Department sources and sources available through other Federal agencies, State government agencies, and non-government entities; and

“(4) ensuring the Department has sufficient dedicated staff whose primary responsibilities are identifying, locating, and paying hard-to-find beneficiaries, with the goal of disbursing by not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 27, 2022], all funds that, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, are owed to a beneficiary of a life insurance policy issued under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code.

“(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should work with interagency partners to determine the types of records, reports, and other materials that may be required to identify, locate, and disburse undisbursed life insurance benefits to hard-to-find beneficiaries.

“(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the progress of the Secretary in carrying out this section.

“(d) UNDISBURSED LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS DEFINED.—The term ‘undisbursed life insurance benefits’—

“(1) means any amount of money that is owed to a beneficiary of a life insurance policy issued under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code, and that has not been disbursed for a period of two years or longer; and

“(2) does not include any amount of money that—

“(A) has not been disbursed due to a contested claim; or

“(B) is in dispute by two or more parties over who is the entitled beneficiary.”

§ 1981. Replacement of surrendered and expired insurance

(a) Any person who surrendered a policy of National Service Life Insurance or United States Government life insurance on a permanent plan for its cash value while in the active service after April 24, 1951, and before January 1, 1957, who was entitled on December 31, 1958, to reinstate or replace such insurance under section 623 of the National Service Life Insurance Act of 1940, may, upon application in writing made while on continuous active duty which began before January 1, 1959, or within one hundred and twenty days after separation therefrom, be granted, without medical examination, permanent plan insurance on the same plan not in excess of the amount surrendered for cash, or may reinstate such surrendered insurance upon payment of the required reserve and the premium for the current month. Waiver of premiums and total disability income benefits otherwise authorized under this chapter shall not be denied in any case of issue or reinstatement of insurance on a permanent plan under this section or the prior corresponding provision of law in which it is shown to the satisfaction of the Sec-

retary that total disability of the applicant began before the date of application. The cost of the premiums waived and total disability income benefits paid by virtue of the preceding sentence and the excess mortality cost in any case where the insurance matures by death from such total disability shall be borne by the United States and the Secretary shall transfer from time to time from the National Service Life Insurance appropriation to the National Service Life Insurance Fund and from the military and naval insurance appropriation to the United States Government Life Insurance Fund such sums as may be necessary to reimburse the funds for such costs.

(b) Any person who had United States Government life insurance or National Service Life Insurance on the five-year level premium term plan, the term of which expired while such person was in the active service after April 25, 1951, or within one hundred and twenty days after separation from such active service, and in either case before January 1, 1957, who was entitled on December 31, 1958, to replace such insurance under section 623 of the National Service Life Insurance Act of 1940, shall, upon application made while on continuous active duty which began before January 1, 1959, or within one hundred and twenty days after separation therefrom, payment of premiums and evidence of good health satisfactory to the Secretary, be granted an equivalent amount of insurance on the five-year level premium term plan at the premium rate for such person's then attained age.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1164, §781; Pub. L. 99-576, title VII, §701(44), Oct. 28, 1986, 100 Stat. 3294; renumbered §1981 and amended Pub. L. 102-83, §§4(b)(1), (2)(E), 5(a), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404-406.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 623 of the National Service Life Insurance Act of 1940, referred to in subsecs. (a) and (b), is section 623 of act Oct. 8, 1940, ch. 757, title VI, pt. I, as added Aug. 1, 1956, ch. 837, title V, §501(a)(4), 70 Stat. 880, which enacted section 824 of former Title 38, Pensions, Bonuses, and Veterans' Relief, and which was repealed and the provisions thereof reenacted as this section by Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1105.

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-83 renumbered section 781 of this title as this section and substituted “Secretary” for “Administrator” wherever appearing.

1986—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 99-576 substituted “such person” for “he” and “such person's” for “his”.

§ 1982. Administrative cost

Except as provided in sections 1920(c), 1923(d), and 1955(c) of this title, the United States shall bear the cost of administration in connection with this chapter, including expenses for medical examinations, inspections when necessary, printing and binding, and for such other expenditures as are necessary in the discretion of the Secretary.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1165, §782; renumbered §1982 and amended Pub. L. 102-83,