



H.R. 2256—Veterans Information Modernization Act, as amended (Rep. Benishek, R-MI)

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FLOOR SCHEDULE: JULY 21, 2015 UNDER A SUSPENSION OF THE RULES, WHICH REQUIRES TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY FOR PASSAGE.

TOPLINE SUMMARY: [H.R. 2256](#) would make numerous changes at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) including: (1) reporting on medical care furnished; (2) amending the definition of homeless veteran; (3) establishing a tracking system for biological implants; and (4) creating a commission to assess mental health care.

CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS: There are no substantive conservative concerns.

- **Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.
- **Encroach into State or Local Authority?** No.
- **Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?** No.
- **Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** No.

DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: First, this bill would require the Veterans Health Administration to submit a yearly report on the furnishing of hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under the VA.

Next, it would update the VA's definition of a homeless veteran to include "a veteran or veteran's family who is fleeing domestic or dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions in the individual's or family's current housing situation, has no other residence, and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing."

This bill would require the secretary to adopt the [unique device identification system](#) developed for medical devices by the Food and Drug Administration or implement a comparable system. The secretary would also implement a system for tracking biological implants from human donors or animal sources. Currently, there is no system in place to track biological imports which could pose a significant risk to veteran health and safety. In addition, the secretary would only be permitted to procure biological implants of human origin from vendors who use the standard identification system and follow additional safety guidelines. This would ensure the ability to track and trace biological implants.

This bill would extend the authority that any increase in educational assistance rates under the Montgomery GI Bill and the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program would be rounded down to the next

COST: The [Congressional Budget Office](#) (CBO) estimates that implementing this bill would increase costs to the VA by \$9 million over the 2016-2020 period.

In addition, CBO estimates that this bill would decrease direct spending by \$9 million over the 2016-2025 period by adjusting the monthly payments for VA educational benefits. As a result, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply.

lower whole dollar amount. This bill would extend this authorization from Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 to FY 2019. After FY 2019, any increases in educational assistance rates would be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

Finally, this bill would create the Veterans Expedited Recovery Commission which would: (1) examine the therapy model used by the VA for treating mental health issues; (2) conduct a patient survey to examine the experience of veterans when seeing mental health assistance; (3) examine available research on complementary alternative treatment therapies for mental health issues; and (4) study the potential increase of claims related to mental health issues of veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. The commission would submit a report with their recommendations no later than 18 months after their first meeting.

COMMITTEE ACTION: This bill was introduced by Representative Benishek on May 12, 2015, and it was referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The committee held a mark-up in May 21, 2015, and the bill was ordered to be reported in the nature of a substitute by voice vote.

Read the committee port [here](#).

ADMINISTRATION POSITION: No statement of administration policy is available at this time.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY: According to the sponsor, Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

H.R. 237—Foreign Terrorist Organization Passport Revocation Act of 2015 (Rep. Poe, R-TX)

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FLOOR SCHEDULE: SCHEDULED FOR CONSIDERATION ON JULY 21, 2015, UNDER A SUSPENSION OF THE RULES WHICH REQUIRES TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY FOR PASSAGE.

TOPLINE SUMMARY: [H.R. 237](#) would authorize the Department of State to revoke or prevent the issuance of a passport to any individual, whom the Secretary of State has determined is a member of, or is aiding, assisting, and abetting an organization designated as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO).

CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS: There are no substantive concerns.

- **Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.
- **Encroach into State or Local Authority?** No.
- **Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?** No.
- **Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** No.

DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The bill would allow the Secretary of State to revoke a passport or passport card previously issued to any individual affiliated with a Department of State-designated [foreign terrorist organization](#). However, in emergency circumstances or for humanitarian reasons, the Secretary could issue a passport or passport card to such an

COST: The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing the bill would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2016-2020 period, assuming the availability of appropriated amounts. This bill would affect direct spending and revenues, and pay-as-you-go procedures. However, CBO estimates those effects would be less than \$500,000 over the 2016-2025 period because few people would be affected.

individual. The secretary could additionally limit a previously issued passport or passport card only for return travel to the United States or issue a limited passport or passport card that only permits return travel to the United States.

Not later than 30 days after such issuance or limitation, the Secretary of State would be required to submit to Congress a report on such issuance or limitation.

The bill would provide the Department of State the ability to revoke the passports of individuals affiliated with or assisting terrorist organizations in light of the recent [news reports](#) of American citizens travelling to Syria and Iraq to join the ranks of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

COMMITTEE ACTION: This resolution was introduced on January 9th, 2015 and was referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The bill was then ordered to be reported in the nature of a substitute (amended) by unanimous consent on April 23, 2015.

ADMINISTRATION POSITION: No statement of administration policy is available.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY: Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 10, 11, and 15.

H.R. 1557—Federal Employee Antidiscrimination Act of 2015 (Rep. Cummings, D-MD)

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FLOOR SCHEDULE: SCHEDULED FOR CONSIDERATION ON JULY 21, 2015, UNDER A SUSPENSION OF THE RULES, WHICH REQUIRES A TWO THIRDS MAJORITY FOR PASSAGE.

TOPLINE SUMMARY: [H.R. 1557](#) would strengthen Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) protections for federal employees.

CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS:

- **Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?**
- **Encroach into State or Local Authority?** No
- **Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?** No
- **Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** No

DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: Currently, federal EEO programs must identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity. Employees who believe they are victims of discrimination can bring a complaint to their agency's EEO program. Some have been concerned that a few federal agencies have not met the EEO program standards set forth by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Section 2 would amend the [Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 \(No FEAR Act\)](#) to expand enforcement and disclosure requirements in relation to discovering acts of discrimination and retaliation in the federal workplace. This bill would declare that accountability in enforcement in relation to federal employee rights is strengthened when agencies take disciplinary action against those found to have committed discriminatory acts.

Section 3 would amend section 202 of the No FEAR Act and would require that in the event of a discriminatory or retaliatory act, the agency must post the finding on their website for a minimum of one year.

Section 4 would amend section 203 of the No FEAR Act and would require annual reports to be submitted in electronic format. It would also require an agency to submit to the EEOC within 60 days of a finding, a report detailing that a discriminatory or retaliatory action has occurred, and whether any disciplinary action was initiated against the offending federal employee.

Section 5 would amend section 301 of the No Fear Act and would expand the required information federal agencies must post on their websites in relation to retaliatory or discriminatory acts, including the date, affected agency, law violated, and any disciplinary action of each finding. Data regarding class action complaints filed must also be provided.

Section 6 would amend section 302 of the No FEAR Act to allow the new Section 5 requirements to apply to the EEOC.

Section 7 would amend the No FEAR Act and would require agencies to create a system to track each complaint alleging a discriminatory act, including any disciplinary action taken. It would also require the agency to make a notation of any adverse action against a federal employee resulting from a finding of discrimination or retaliation in the personnel record of the employee. It would also create a Title IV, entitled Processing and Referral, under the No FEAR Act, to require each federal agency to implement an EEO program, not controlled by Human Capital or General Counsel and free of conflicts of interest. The head of each EEO program would report to the head of the agency. Finally, it would also require the EEOC to make a referral to the Office of Special Counsel (OSC), when a discriminatory or retaliatory act has occurred. The OSC would be required to notify the EEOC of any pending disciplinary action.

Section 8 would prohibit non-disclosure agreements that bar an employee from notifying Congress, OSC or the Office of the Inspector General about violations of fraud, abuse, or waste.

A committee report on the subject can be found [here](#).

COMMITTEE ACTION: This bill was introduced on March 24, 2015 and was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. It was reported favorably by voice vote on March 25, 2015.

ADMINISTRATION POSITION: No Statement of Administration Position is available.

COST: The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that under this bill there would be some minor additional costs for agencies to track and report discriminatory acts and to notify the public of violations of antidiscrimination laws. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1557 would increase federal administrative costs by less than \$500,000 annually,. In addition, H.R. 1557 could affect direct spending by some agencies because they are authorized to use receipts from the sale of goods, fees, and other collections to cover their operating costs, therefore pay-as-you-go procedures apply.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY: Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The constitutional authority on which this legislation is based is found in Article 1, Section 8: The Congress shall have power to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States

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