

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7153

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 18 (legislative day, MAY 17), 2022

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan to modernize the information technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Administration, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Department of Vet-
3 erans Affairs Principles of Benefits Automation Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

5 It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Vet-
6 erans Affairs should increase automation in the processing
7 of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the
8 Secretary in accordance with the following principles:

9 (1) The purpose of automation should be to in-
10 crease the speed and accuracy of claims processing
11 decisions.

12 (2) Automation should be conducted in a man-
13 ner that enhances the productivity of employees of
14 the Department of Veterans Affairs.

15 (3) Automation should be carried out in a man-
16 ner that achieves greater consistency in the proc-
17 essing and rating of claims by relying on patterns of
18 similar evidence in claim files.

19 (4) To the greatest extent possible, automation
20 should be carried out by drawing from information
21 in the possession of the Department, other Govern-
22 ment agencies, and claimants for benefits.

23 (5) Automation of any claims process or deter-
24 mination should not be end-to-end.

1 (6) Employees of the Department should con-
2 tinue to make decisions with respect to the approval
3 of claims and the granting of benefits.

4 (7) Automation should not be carried out in a
5 manner that reduces or infringes upon—

6 (A) the due process rights of claimants for
7 benefits under the laws administered by the
8 Secretary; or

9 (B) the duties of the Secretary to assist
10 and notify claimants.

11 (8) Automation should be carried out while tak-
12 ing all necessary measures to protect the privacy of
13 claimants and their personally identifiable informa-
14 tion.

15 (9) Automation of claims processing should not
16 eliminate or reduce the Veterans Benefits Adminis-
17 tration workforce.

18 **SEC. 3. PLAN FOR MODERNIZATION OF VETERANS BENE-**
19 **FITS ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION TECH-**
20 **NOLOGY SYSTEMS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
22 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
23 erans Affairs shall submit to appropriate congressional
24 committees a plan for the modernization of the informa-
25 tion technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Adminis-

1 tration. The plan shall cover the first fiscal year that be-
2 gins after the date of the enactment of this Act and the
3 subsequent four fiscal years and shall include each of the
4 following:

5 (1) An identification of any information system
6 to be modernized or retired, if applicable, during the
7 period covered by the plan.

8 (2) A description of how the Secretary intends
9 to incorporate the principles referred to in section 2
10 into the modernization of such information systems.

11 (3) An identification of targets, for each fiscal
12 year, by which the Secretary intends to complete the
13 modernization of each information system or major
14 component or functionality of such system identified
15 under paragraph (1).

16 (4) Cost estimates for the modernization of
17 each information system identified under paragraph
18 (1) for each fiscal year covered by the plan and in
19 total.

20 (b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—
21 In this section, the term “appropriate congressional com-
22 mittees” means—

23 (1) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the
24 Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans’

Attest: **CHERYL L. JOHNSON,**
Clerk.