

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2316

To expand eligibility for certain housing programs for qualified volunteer first responders.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 12, 2021

Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. CRAMER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To expand eligibility for certain housing programs for qualified volunteer first responders.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Volunteer First Re-
5 sponder Housing Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) BONA FIDE VOLUNTEER; ELIGIBLE EM-
9 PLOYER; QUALIFIED SERVICES.—The terms “bona
10 fide volunteer”, “eligible employer”, and “qualified

services” have the meanings given those terms in section 457(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given the term “Indian tribe” in section 501(b) of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1471(b)).

(3) QUALIFIED VOLUNTEER FIRST RESPONDER.—The term “qualified volunteer first responder” means any individual who—

(A) is a bona fide volunteer performing qualified services for an eligible employer;

(B) continuously served as a volunteer for the eligible employer during the 2-year period preceding the date on which the individual submits a verification letter under section 3(b) or 4(b);

(C) during each of the 2 years described in subparagraph (B)—

(i) met the minimum requirements for active membership established by the eligible employer; or

(ii) if the eligible employer did not establish minimum requirements, volunteered for not less than 200 hours; and

1 (D) is certified as a firefighter or other
 2 first responder in the State, political subdivision
 3 of a State, or jurisdiction of an Indian Tribe in
 4 which the individual is serving as volunteer.

5 **SEC. 3. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SINGLE FAMILY**
 6 **HOUSING GUARANTEED LOAN PROGRAM.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—A qualified volunteer first re-
 8 sponder who submits to the Secretary of Agriculture (re-
 9 ferred to in this section as the “Secretary”) a verification
 10 letter in accordance with subsection (b) shall be eligible
 11 for a deduction in annual income under section
 12 3555.152(c) of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (or
 13 any successor regulation), in the amount of \$18,000.

14 (b) VERIFICATION LETTER.—To be eligible for a de-
 15 duction under subsection (a), a qualified volunteer first
 16 responder shall submit to the Secretary a verification let-
 17 ter from the head of the eligible employer for which the
 18 qualified volunteer first responder volunteers, which
 19 shall—

20 (1) include the date on which the qualified vol-
 21 unteer first responder joined the eligible employer as
 22 a volunteer;

23 (2) attest to the Secretary that the qualified
 24 volunteer first responder meets the requirements

1 under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 2(3);
 2 and

3 (3) include a copy of the certification described
 4 in section 2(3)(D).

5 **SEC. 4. GOOD NEIGHBOR NEXT DOOR SALES PROGRAM**
 6 **AND SIMILAR PROGRAMS.**

7 (a) **ELIGIBILITY.**—A qualified volunteer first re-
 8 sponder who submits to the Secretary of Housing and
 9 Urban Development (referred to in this section as the
 10 “Secretary”) a verification letter in accordance with sub-
 11 section (b) shall qualify as a firefighter or emergency med-
 12 ical technician for purposes of any single family property
 13 disposition program carried out by the Secretary by regu-
 14 lation under section 204(g) of the National Housing Act
 15 (12 U.S.C. 1710(g)) that offers discounted home prices
 16 to firefighters or emergency medical technicians.

17 (b) **VERIFICATION LETTER.**—To qualify to purchase
 18 a home under a single family property disposition program
 19 referred to in subsection (a), a qualified first responder
 20 shall submit to the Secretary a verification letter from the
 21 head of the eligible employer for which the qualified volun-
 22 teer first responder volunteers, which shall—

23 (1) include the date on which the qualified vol-
 24 unteer first responder joined the eligible employer as
 25 a volunteer;

1 (2) attest to the Secretary that the qualified
2 volunteer first responder meets the requirements
3 under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 2(3);

4 (3) include a copy of the certification described
5 in section 2(3)(D); and

6 (4) include a certification from the qualified
7 volunteer first responder of the responder's good
8 faith intention to continue serving as a volunteer for
9 the eligible employer for not less than 1 year fol-
10 lowing the date of closing.

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