

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 5152

To direct the Secretary of Defense to establish a program to ensure, under certain conditions, that members of the Armed Forces are automatically enrolled in benefits and services under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for which such members are eligible.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 4, 2023

Mr. NEGUSE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense to establish a program to ensure, under certain conditions, that members of the Armed Forces are automatically enrolled in benefits and services under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for which such members are eligible.

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. PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO**  
2 **ENROLL CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED**  
3 **FORCES IN BENEFITS AND SERVICES UNDER**  
4 **THE LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SEC-**  
5 **RETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the  
7 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of De-  
8 fense, in coordination with the Secretary of Veterans Af-  
9 fairs, shall carry out a program to—

10 (1) identify covered benefits, if any, for which  
11 each covered member of an Armed Force is eligible  
12 to enroll;

13 (2) notify each covered member of the relevant  
14 covered benefits identified under subparagraph (A);  
15 and

16 (3) except as provided in subsection (e), ensure  
17 such covered member is enrolled in such covered  
18 benefits.

19 (b) NOTIFICATION TO SECRETARY OF VETERANS AF-  
20 FAIRS.—With respect to any covered member of an Armed  
21 Force the Secretary of Defense determines is eligible for  
22 enrollment in a covered benefit, such Secretary shall, not  
23 later than 90 days before the date on which such covered  
24 member is separated from service, submit to the Secretary  
25 of Veterans Affairs a notification that includes—

1           (1) the name, contact information, and military  
2 service details of such covered member;

3           (2) the anticipated date on which such covered  
4 member will be separated from service; and

5           (3) a description of any military occupational  
6 specialty and training such covered member received  
7 during service.

8           (c) OUTREACH REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days  
9 after any date on which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
10 receives a notification under subsection (b), such Sec-  
11 retary shall contact the covered member of an Armed  
12 Force described in such notification and provide materials  
13 and resources relating to covered benefits.

14           (d) INFORMATION SHARING.—The Secretary of De-  
15 fense, in coordination with the Secretary of Veterans Af-  
16 fairs, shall establish procedures to—

17           (1) share necessary information to facilitate the  
18 automatic enrollment process under subsection (a);  
19 and

20           (2) ensure the secure and confidential transfer  
21 of data during any such sharing of necessary infor-  
22 mation.

23           (e) OPT-OUT PROVISION.—The decision to enroll in  
24 a covered benefit pursuant to subsection (a) shall be at

1 the election of the relevant covered member of an Armed  
2 Force.

3 (f) WORKING GROUP.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense, in  
5 consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs,  
6 shall establish a working group to address potential  
7 barriers and challenges in implementing the auto-  
8 matic enrollment process. The working group shall  
9 consist of representatives from the Department of  
10 Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and  
11 other relevant stakeholders as determined by such  
12 Secretaries.

13 (2) DUTIES.—The working group shall be re-  
14 sponsible for—

15 (A) identifying potential barriers to imple-  
16 mentation, such as legal, technological, or ad-  
17 ministrative challenges; and

18 (B) developing strategies and recommenda-  
19 tions to overcome such potential barriers and  
20 ensure the successful implementation of auto-  
21 matic enrollments.

22 (3) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after  
23 the date on which such Secretaries establish the  
24 working group under paragraph (1), the head of  
25 such working group shall submit to Congress a re-

1 port that includes findings, recommendations, and  
2 proposed timelines for implementation.

3 (g) GAO REPORT ON NOTICE OF AUTOMATIC EN-  
4 ROLLMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of  
5 the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the  
6 United States shall submit to Congress a report con-  
7 taining the results of a study to determine the best meth-  
8 ods for the Secretary of Defense to provide notice under  
9 subsection (a)(2). In making such determination, the  
10 Comptroller General shall consider needs of veterans  
11 based on—

12 (1) age;

13 (2) residence in urban areas; and

14 (3) residence in rural areas.

15 (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 (1) The term “covered benefit” means a benefit  
17 or service under the laws administered by the Sec-  
18 retary of Veterans Affairs.

19 (2) The term “covered member of an Armed  
20 Force” means a member of the Armed Forces par-  
21 ticipating in the Transition Assistance Program of  
22 the Department of Defense under section 1142 and  
23 1144 of title 10, United States Code.

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