

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 717

To prohibit the removal from the United States of certain veterans, to expedite their naturalization, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 1, 2023

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. CORREA, Mr. CUELLAR, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. NEGUSE, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. BLUMENAUER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## A BILL

To prohibit the removal from the United States of certain veterans, to expedite their naturalization, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Repatriate Our Patri-  
5 ots Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITION.**

2 In this Act, the term “special veteran” means an in-  
3 dividual who is an alien and is described in section 101(2)  
4 of title 38, United States Code, except the term—

5 (1) only includes individuals who were dis-  
6 charged or released from the Armed Forces under  
7 honorable conditions;

8 (2) does not include individuals who have been  
9 convicted of voluntary manslaughter, murder, rape,  
10 sexual abuse of a minor, or any offense under chap-  
11 ter 113B of title 18, United States Code (relating to  
12 terrorism); and

13 (3) does not include individuals who have been  
14 determined to be a child abuser or a pedophile.

15 **SEC. 3. PROTECTING SPECIAL VETERANS FROM REMOVAL.**

16 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including  
17 section 237 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8  
18 U.S.C. 1227), a special veteran shall not be removed from  
19 the United States.

20 **SEC. 4. NATURALIZATION FOR SPECIAL VETERANS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provi-  
22 sion of law, a special veteran shall be naturalized as a cit-  
23 izen of the United States upon the filing of the appro-  
24 priate application, paying the appropriate fees, and, except  
25 as provided in subsection (b), taking and subscribing be-  
26 fore an officer of the Department of Homeland Security

1 within the United States to the oath of allegiance required  
2 by section 337 of the Immigration and Nationality Act  
3 (8 U.S.C. 1448). The Secretary of Homeland Security  
4 shall take steps to ensure that the period in which an ap-  
5 plication for naturalization under this section is pending  
6 does not exceed 90 days. The Secretary shall furnish each  
7 special veteran naturalized under this section with a cer-  
8 tificate of citizenship.

9 (b) SPECIAL VETERANS ABROAD.—In the case of a  
10 special veteran residing abroad, the application for natu-  
11 ralization may be filed from abroad, and the oath of alle-  
12 giance described in subsection (a) may be subscribed to  
13 abroad at United States embassies and consulates.

14 (c) WAIVER.—Consistent with section 337(a) of the  
15 Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1448(a)), the  
16 Secretary of Homeland Security may waive the taking of  
17 the oath of allegiance described in subsection (a) by a spe-  
18 cial veteran if, in the opinion of the Secretary, the special  
19 veteran is unable to understand, or to communicate an  
20 understanding of, its meaning because of a physical or de-  
21 velopmental disability or mental impairment.

22 **SEC. 5. TREATMENT OF SPECIAL VETERANS IN REMOVAL**  
23 **PROCEEDINGS OR ORDERED REMOVED.**

24 In the case of a special veteran in removal pro-  
25 ceedings on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-

1   retary of Homeland Security shall cancel the removal of  
2   the special veteran. In the case of a special veteran who  
3   was ordered removed before the date of the enactment of  
4   this Act, the Attorney General shall rescind any out-  
5   standing order of removal, and any finding that the special  
6   veteran is subject to removal or is inadmissible. In the case  
7   of a special veteran physically present in the United States  
8   whose status as an alien lawfully admitted for permanent  
9   residence was rescinded before the date of the enactment  
10  of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall allow  
11  the veteran to adjust status to that of an alien lawfully  
12  admitted for permanent residence without regard to any  
13  numerical limitation in the Immigration and Nationality  
14  Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

15 **SEC. 6. RETURN OF SPECIAL VETERANS REMOVED FROM**  
16 **THE UNITED STATES.**

17       Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-  
18  ment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish a program  
19  and application procedure to permit special veterans re-  
20  moved from the United States before the date of the en-  
21  actment of this Act to enter the United States as an alien  
22  lawfully admitted for permanent residence without regard  
23  to any numerical limitation in the Immigration and Na-  
24  tionality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

1 **SEC. 7. IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL VETERANS.**

2 (a) IDENTIFICATION.—The Secretary of Homeland  
3 Security shall identify immigration cases involving special  
4 veterans by—

5 (1) inquiring of every alien processed prior to  
6 initiating removal proceedings whether the alien is a  
7 special veteran; and

8 (2) keeping records of special veterans who  
9 have been detained under the immigration laws, had  
10 removal proceedings against them initiated before  
11 the date of the enactment of this Act, or been re-  
12 moved before such date.

13 (b) RECORD ANNOTATION.—When the Secretary has  
14 identified a case under subsection (a), the Secretary shall  
15 annotate all immigration and naturalization records of the  
16 Department of Homeland Security relating to the special  
17 veteran involved so as to reflect that identification and af-  
18 ford an opportunity to track the outcomes for the veteran.  
19 Such annotation shall include—

20 (1) the veteran's branch of military service;

21 (2) whether or not the veteran served during a  
22 period of military hostilities described in section 329  
23 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.  
24 1440); and

1           (3) the veteran's immigration status at the time  
2           of enlistment.

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