

Calendar No. \_\_\_\_\_

119<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION**S. 2309****[Report No. 119-\_\_\_\_\_]**

To direct a physician or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than 48 hours after such physician or nurse practitioner learns of such death, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 16, 2025

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Ms. HASSAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_ (legislative day, \_\_\_\_\_), \_\_\_\_\_

Reported by \_\_\_\_\_, with an amendment and an amendment to the title

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italics]

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**A BILL**

To direct a physician or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than 48 hours after such physician or nurse practitioner learns of such death, 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 “Veteran Burial Timeli-  
3 ness and Death Certificate Accountability Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) States and counties have reported signifi-  
7 cant delays in the signing of death certificates for  
8 veterans who pass away from natural causes.

9 (2) Such delays, caused by the refusal of, or  
10 postponement by, physicians of the Department of  
11 Veterans Affairs have, in some cases, lasted as long  
12 as eight weeks.

13 (3) Such delays prevent the timely burial of de-  
14 ceased veterans and access to survivor benefits.

15 **SEC. 3. TIMELY CERTIFICATION OF THE DEATH OF A VET-  
16 ERAN.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—

18 (1) VA PHYSICIAN OR NURSE PRACTITIONER.—

19 Subject to paragraph (2), a physician or nurse prac-  
20 titioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Af-  
21 fairs who is the primary care provider of a veteran  
22 who dies of natural causes shall certify the death of  
23 such veteran not later than 48 hours after such phy-  
24 sician or nurse practitioner learns of such death.

25 (2) CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER.—If a  
26 physician or nurse practitioner described in para-

1 graph (1) cannot comply with such paragraph with  
2 respect to a death described in such paragraph, a  
3 coroner or medical examiner in the jurisdiction  
4 where such death occurred may certify such death.

5 (b) REPORT.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year  
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-  
8 nually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the  
9 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and  
10 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of  
11 Representatives a report regarding compliance with  
12 subsection (a).

13 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each report required under  
14 paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to the year  
15 preceding the date of the report, the following ele-  
16 ments:

17 (A) The percentage of cases in which a  
18 physician or nurse practitioner employed by the  
19 Secretary complied with subsection (a)(1).

20 (B) The number of cases in which such a  
21 physician or nurse practitioner could not so  
22 comply.

23 (C) An identification of the most common  
24 reasons why such a physician or nurse practi-  
25 tioner could not so comply.



1           (1) *VA PHYSICIAN, NURSE PRACTITIONER, OR*  
2           *PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT.—Subject to paragraph (2), a*  
3           *physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant*  
4           *employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs who is*  
5           *the primary care provider of a veteran who dies of*  
6           *natural causes shall certify the death of such veteran*  
7           *not later than two business days after such physician,*  
8           *nurse practitioner, or physician assistant learns of*  
9           *such death.*

10           (2) *CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER.—If a*  
11           *physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant*  
12           *described in paragraph (1) cannot comply with such*  
13           *paragraph with respect to a death described in such*  
14           *paragraph, a coroner or medical examiner in the ju-*  
15           *risdiction where such death occurred may certify such*  
16           *death.*

17           (b) *REPORT.—*

18           (1) *IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after*  
19           *the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually*  
20           *thereafter for the following five years, the Secretary*  
21           *shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of*  
22           *the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of*  
23           *the House of Representatives a report regarding com-*  
24           *pliance with subsection (a).*

1           (2) *ELEMENTS.*—*Each report required under*  
2           *paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to the year*  
3           *preceding the date of the report, the following ele-*  
4           *ments:*

5                   (A) *The percentage of cases in which a phy-*  
6                   *sician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant*  
7                   *employed by the Secretary complied with sub-*  
8                   *section (a)(1).*

9                   (B) *The number of cases in which such a*  
10                  *physician, nurse practitioner, or physician as-*  
11                  *stant could not so comply.*

12                  (C) *An identification of the most common*  
13                  *reasons why such a physician, nurse practi-*  
14                  *tioner, or physician assistant could not so com-*  
15                  *ply.*

16           (c) *RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.*—*Nothing in this section*  
17           *shall be construed to authorize a physician assistant or*  
18           *nurse practitioner to certify a death in any State in which*  
19           *such authority is not permitted under State or local law.*

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to direct a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than two business days after such physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant learns of such death, and for other purposes.”.