

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To defer action regarding certain debts arising from benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a period of time including the COVID–19 emergency period, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To defer action regarding certain debts arising from benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a period of time including the COVID–19 emergency period, 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 “Veteran Debt Relief
5 During COVID–19 Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFERRAL OF CERTAIN DEBTS ARISING FROM BEN-**
2 **EFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE**
3 **SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—During the covered period, the
5 Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not—

6 (1) take any action to collect a covered debt (in-
7 cluding the offset of any payment by the Secretary);

8 (2) record a covered debt;

9 (3) issue notice of a covered debt to a person
10 or a consumer reporting agency;

11 (4) allow any interest to accrue on a covered
12 debt; or

13 (5) apply any administrative fee to a covered
14 debt.

15 (b) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a),
16 the Secretary may collect a payment regarding a covered
17 debt (including interest or any administrative fee) from
18 a person (or the fiduciary of that person) who elects to
19 make such a payment during the covered period.

20 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 (1) CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCY.—The term
22 “consumer reporting agency” has the meaning given
23 that term in section 5701 of title 38, United States
24 Code.

25 (2) COVERED DEBT.—The term “covered debt”
26 means a debt—

1 (A) owed by a person (including a fidu-
2 ciary) to the United States;

3 (B) arising from a benefit under a covered
4 law; and

5 (C) that is not subject to recovery under—

6 (i) section 3729 of title 31, United
7 States Code;

8 (ii) section 1729 of title 38, United
9 States Code; or

10 (iii) Public Law 87–693 (42 U.S.C.
11 2651).

12 (3) COVERED LAW.—The term “covered law”
13 means any law administered by the Secretary of Vet-
14 erans Affairs through—

15 (A) the Under Secretary for Health; or

16 (B) the Under Secretary for Benefits.

17 (4) COVERED PERIOD.—The term “covered pe-
18 riod” means—

19 (A) the COVID–19 emergency period; and

20 (B) the 60 days immediately following the
21 date of the end of the COVID–19 emergency
22 period.

23 (5) COVID–19 EMERGENCY PERIOD.—The
24 term “COVID–19 emergency period” means the
25 emergency period described in section 1135(g)(1)(B)

1 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b-
2 5(g)(1)(B)).