

**AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5620, AS REPORTED
OFFERED BY MR. BUTTERFIELD OF NORTH
CAROLINA**

Page 54, add after line 2 the following:

1 **SEC. 11. METHODS FOR VALIDATING CERTAIN SERVICE**
2 **CONSIDERED TO BE ACTIVE SERVICE BY THE**
3 **SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—For the purposes of verifying that
5 an individual performed service under honorable condi-
6 tions that satisfies the requirements of a coastwise mer-
7 chant seaman who is recognized pursuant to section 401
8 of the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-
9 202; 38 U.S.C. 106 note) as having performed active duty
10 service for the purposes described in subsection (c)(1), the
11 Secretary of Homeland Security shall accept the following:

12 (1) In the case of an individual who served on
13 a coastwise merchant vessel seeking such recognition
14 for whom no applicable Coast Guard shipping or dis-
15 charge form, ship logbook, merchant mariner’s docu-
16 ment or Z-card, or other official employment record
17 is available, the Secretary shall provide such recogni-
18 tion on the basis of applicable Social Security Ad-
19 ministration records submitted for or by the indi-

1 vidual, together with validated testimony given by
2 the individual or the primary next of kin of the indi-
3 vidual that the individual performed such service
4 during the period beginning on December 7, 1941,
5 and ending on December 31, 1946.

6 (2) In the case of an individual who served on
7 a coastwise merchant vessel seeking such recognition
8 for whom the applicable Coast Guard shipping or
9 discharge form, ship logbook, merchant mariner's
10 document or Z-card, or other official employment
11 record has been destroyed or otherwise become un-
12 available by reason of any action committed by a
13 person responsible for the control and maintenance
14 of such form, logbook, or record, the Secretary shall
15 accept other official documentation demonstrating
16 that the individual performed such service during pe-
17 riod beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on
18 December 31, 1946.

19 (3) For the purpose of determining whether to
20 recognize service allegedly performed during the pe-
21 riod beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on
22 December 31, 1946, the Secretary shall recognize
23 masters of seagoing vessels or other officers in com-
24 mand of similarly organized groups as agents of the
25 United States who were authorized to document any

1 individual for purposes of hiring the individual to
2 perform service in the merchant marine or dis-
3 charging an individual from such service.

4 (b) TREATMENT OF OTHER DOCUMENTATION.—

5 Other documentation accepted by the Secretary of Home-
6 land Security pursuant to subsection (a)(2) shall satisfy
7 all requirements for eligibility of service during the period
8 beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December
9 31, 1946.

10 (c) BENEFITS ALLOWED.—

11 (1) BURIAL BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY.—Service of
12 an individual that is considered active duty pursuant
13 to subsection (a) shall be considered as active duty
14 service with respect to providing burial benefits
15 under chapters 23 and 24 of title 38, United States
16 Code, to the individual.

17 (2) MEDALS, RIBBONS, AND DECORATIONS.—

18 An individual whose service is recognized as active
19 duty pursuant to subsection (a) may be awarded an
20 appropriate medal, ribbon, or other military decora-
21 tion based on such service.

22 (3) STATUS OF VETERAN.—An individual whose

23 service is recognized as active duty pursuant to sub-
24 section (a) shall be honored as a veteran but shall
25 not be entitled by reason of such recognized service

1 to any benefit that is not described in this sub-
2 section.

3 (d) DETERMINATION OF COASTWISE MERCHANT
4 SEAMAN.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall
5 verify that an individual performed service under honor-
6 able conditions that satisfies the requirements of a coast-
7 wise merchant seaman pursuant to this section without
8 regard to the sex, age, or disability of the individual dur-
9 ing the period in which the individual served as such a
10 coastwise merchant seaman.

11 (e) DEFINITION OF PRIMARY NEXT OF KIN.—In this
12 section, the term “primary next of kin” with respect to
13 an individual seeking recognition for service under this
14 section means the closest living relative of the individual
15 who was alive during the period of such service.

16 (f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect
17 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

