

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6049

To award payments to employees of Air America who provided support to the United States from 1950 to 1976, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Mr. GROTHMAN (for himself, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. NORTON, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. TRONE, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. TIFFANY, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. ESCOBAR, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. BOST, Mr. COSTA, Ms. TITUS, Ms. LEE of Nevada, Mr. MRVAN, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. NADLER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. CARSON, Mr. KILMER, Ms. BROWNLEY, and Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

A BILL

To award payments to employees of Air America who provided support to the United States from 1950 to 1976, 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 “Air America Act of
5 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Air America and its affiliated companies, in
4 coordination with the Central Intelligence Agency,
5 provided direct and indirect support to the United
6 States Government from 1950 to 1976.

7 (2) The service and sacrifice of employees of
8 Air America included—

9 (A) suffering a high rate of casualties in
10 the course of service;

11 (B) saving thousands of lives in search and
12 rescue missions for downed United States air-
13 men and allied refugee evacuations; and

14 (C) serving lengthy periods under chal-
15 lenging circumstances abroad.

16 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

17 In this Act:

18 (1) **AFFILIATED COMPANY.**—The term “affili-
19 ated company”, with respect to Air America, in-
20 cludes Air Asia Company Limited, CAT Incor-
21 porated, Civil Air Transport Company Limited, and
22 the Pacific Division of Southern Air Transport.

23 (2) **AIR AMERICA.**—The term “Air America”
24 means Air America, Incorporated.

1 (3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
2 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
3 mittees” means—

4 (A) the Committee on Homeland Security
5 and Governmental Affairs, the Select Com-
6 mittee on Intelligence, and the Committee on
7 Appropriations of the Senate; and

8 (B) the Committee on Oversight and Ac-
9 countability, the Permanent Select Committee
10 on Intelligence, and the Committee on Appro-
11 priations of the House of Representatives.

12 (4) CHILD; DEPENDENT; WIDOW; WIDOWER.—
13 The terms “child”, “dependent”, “widow”, and
14 “widower” have the meanings given those terms in
15 section 8341(a) of title 5, United States Code, ex-
16 cept that section shall be applied by substituting
17 “individual who performed qualifying service” for
18 “employee or Member”.

19 (5) COVERED DECEDENT.—The term “covered
20 decedent” means an individual who was killed in
21 Southeast Asia while supporting operations of the
22 Central Intelligence Agency during the period begin-
23 ning on January 1, 1950, and ending on December
24 31, 1976, as a United States citizen employee of Air
25 America or an affiliated company.

1 (6) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
2 the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

3 (7) QUALIFYING SERVICE.—The term “quali-
4 fying service” means service that—

5 (A) was performed by a United States cit-
6 izen as an employee of Air America or an affili-
7 ated company during the period beginning on
8 January 1, 1950, and ending on December 31,
9 1976; and

10 (B) is documented in—

11 (i) the corporate records of Air Amer-
12 ica or an affiliated company;

13 (ii) records possessed by the United
14 States Government; or

15 (iii) the personal records of a former
16 employee of Air America or an affiliated
17 company that are verified by the United
18 States Government.

19 (8) SURVIVOR.—The term “survivor” means—

20 (A) the widow or widower of—

21 (i) an individual who performed quali-
22 fying service; or

23 (ii) a covered decedent; or

24 (B) an individual who, at any time during
25 or since the period of qualifying service, or on

1 the date of death of a covered decedent, was a
2 dependent or child of—

3 (i) the individual who performed such
4 qualifying service; or

5 (ii) the covered decedent.

6 **SEC. 4. AWARD AUTHORIZED TO ELIGIBLE PERSONS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the limitation in sub-
8 section (d), the Director shall provide an award payment
9 of \$40,000 under this section—

10 (1) to an individual who performed qualifying
11 service for a period of greater than or equal to 5
12 years or to a survivor of such individual; or

13 (2) to the survivor of a covered decedent.

14 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible for a payment
16 under this subsection, an individual who performed
17 qualifying service or survivor (as the case may be)
18 must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Director
19 that the individual whose qualifying service upon
20 which the payment is based meets the criteria of
21 paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (a).

22 (2) RELIANCE ON RECORDS.—In carrying out
23 this subsection, in addition to any evidence provided
24 by such an individual or survivor, the Director may

1 rely on records possessed by the United States Gov-
2 ernment.

3 (c) **ADDITIONAL PAYMENT.**—If an individual, or in
4 the case of a survivor, the individual whose qualifying
5 service upon which the payment is based, can demonstrate
6 to the Director that the qualifying service of the individual
7 exceeded 5 years, the Director shall pay to such individual
8 or survivor an additional \$8,000 for each full year in ex-
9 cess of 5 years (and a proportionate amount for a partial
10 year).

11 (d) **SURVIVORS.**—In the case of an award granted to
12 a survivor under this section, the payment shall be made—

- 13 (1) to the surviving widow or widower; or
14 (2) if there is no surviving widow or widower,
15 to the surviving dependent or child, in equal shares.

16 **SEC. 5. FUNDING LIMITATION.**

17 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The total amount of awards
18 granted under this Act may not exceed \$60,000,000.

19 (b) **REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS.**—If, at the
20 determination of the Director, the amount of funds re-
21 quired to satisfy all valid applications for payment under
22 this Act exceeds the limitation set forth in subsection (a),
23 the Director shall submit to Congress a request for suffi-
24 cient funds to fulfill all remaining payments.

1 (c) AWARDS TO EMPLOYEES OF INTERMOUNTAIN
2 AVIATION.—The Director may determine, on a case-by-
3 case basis, to award amounts to individuals who performed
4 service consistent with the definition of qualifying service
5 as employees of Intermountain Aviation.

6 **SEC. 6. TIME LIMITATION.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible for an award pay-
8 ment under this Act, a claimant must file a claim for such
9 payment with the Director not later than 2 years after
10 the effective date of the regulations prescribed by the Di-
11 rector in accordance with section 7.

12 (b) DETERMINATION.—Not later than 90 days after
13 receiving a claim for an award payment under this section,
14 the Director shall determine the eligibility of the claimant
15 for payment.

16 (c) PAYMENT.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—If the Director determines
18 that the claimant is eligible for the award payment,
19 the Director shall pay the award payment not later
20 than 60 days after the date of such determination.

21 (2) LUMP-SUM PAYMENT.—The Director shall
22 issue each payment as a one-time lump sum pay-
23 ment contingent upon the timely filing of the claim-
24 ant under this section.

1 (3) NOTICE AND DELAYS.—The Director shall
2 notify the appropriate congressional committees of
3 any delays in making an award payment not later
4 than 30 days after the date such payment is due.

5 **SEC. 7. APPLICATION PROCEDURES.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall prescribe pro-
7 cedures to carry out this Act, which shall include processes
8 under which—

9 (1) claimants may submit claims for payment
10 under this Act;

11 (2) the Director will award the amounts under
12 section 4; and

13 (3) claimants can obtain redress and appeal de-
14 terminations under section 6.

15 (b) OTHER MATTERS.—Such procedures—

16 (1) shall be—

17 (A) prescribed not later than 60 days after
18 the date of the enactment of this Act; and

19 (B) published in the Code of Federal Reg-
20 ulations; and

21 (2) shall not be subject to chapter 5 of title 5,
22 United States Code.

23 **SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

24 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to—

1 (1) entitle any person to Federal benefits, in-
2 cluding retirement benefits under chapter 83 or 84
3 of title 5, United States Code, and disability or
4 death benefits under chapter 81 of such title;

5 (2) change the legal status of the former Air
6 America corporation or any affiliated company; or

7 (3) create any legal rights, benefits, or entitle-
8 ments beyond the one-time award authorized by this
9 Act.

10 **SEC. 9. ATTORNEYS' AND AGENTS' FEES.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—It shall be unlawful for more than
12 25 percent of an award paid pursuant to this Act to be
13 paid to, or received by, any agent or attorney for any serv-
14 ice rendered to a person who receives an award under sec-
15 tion 4, in connection with the award under this Act.

16 (b) VIOLATION.—Any agent or attorney who violates
17 subsection (a) shall be fined under title 18, United States
18 Code.

19 **SEC. 10. NO JUDICIAL REVIEW.**

20 A determination by the Director pursuant to this Act
21 is final and conclusive and shall not be subject to judicial
22 review.

23 **SEC. 11. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**

24 Until the date that all funds available for awards
25 under this Act are expended, the Director shall submit to

1 the appropriate congressional committees a semiannual re-
2 port describing the numbers of award payments made and
3 denied during the 180 days preceding the submission of
4 the report, including the rationales for any denials, and
5 if, at the determination of the Director, the amount of
6 funds provided to carry out this Act are insufficient to
7 satisfy any remaining or anticipated claims.

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