AMENDMENT TO THE RULES COMMITTEE PRINT
FOR H.R. 4435
OFFERED BY MR. BUTTERFIELD OF NORTH CAROLINA

At the end of subtitle G of title X, add the following new section:

SEC. 1082. METHODS FOR VALIDATING CERTAIN SERVICE CONSIDERED TO BE ACTIVE SERVICE BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

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

(1) In the case of an individual who served on a coastwise merchant vessel seeking such recognition for whom no applicable Coast Guard shipping or discharge form, ship logbook, merchant mariner’s document or Z-card, or other official employment record is available, the Secretary shall provide such recogni-
tion on the basis of applicable Social Security Admin-
istration records submitted for or by the indi-
vidual, together with validated testimony given by
the individual or the primary next of kin of the indi-
vidual that the individual performed such service
during the period beginning on December 7, 1941,
and ending on December 31, 1946.

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

(3) For the purpose of determining whether to
recognize service allegedly performed during the pe-
riod beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on
December 31, 1946, the Secretary shall recognize
masters of seagoing vessels or other officers in com-
mand of similarly organized groups as agents of the United States who were authorized to document any individual for purposes of hiring the individual to perform service in the merchant marine or discharging an individual from such service.

(b) Treatment of Other Documentation.—

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

(c) Benefits Allowed.—

(1) Burial Benefits Eligibility.—Service of an individual that is considered active duty pursuant to subsection (a) shall be considered as active duty service with respect to providing burial benefits under chapters 23 and 24 of title 38, United States Code, to the individual.

(2) Medals, Ribbons, and Decorations.—

An individual whose service is recognized as active duty pursuant to subsection (a) may be awarded an appropriate medal, ribbon, or other military decoration based on such service.

(3) Status of Veteran.—An individual whose service is recognized as active duty pursuant to sub-
section (a) shall be honored as a veteran but shall not be entitled by reason of such recognized service to any benefit that is not described in this subsection.

(d) Determination of Coastwise Merchant Seaman.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall verify that an individual performed service under honorable conditions that satisfies the requirements of a coastwise merchant seaman pursuant to this section without regard to the sex, age, or disability of the individual during the period in which the individual served as such a coastwise merchant seaman.

(e) Definitions.—In this section:

(1) The term “coastwise merchant seaman” means a mariner that served on a tug boat, towboat, or seagoing barge that transported war materials to and from ports located in the territorial seas of the United States in support of the war effort during the period beginning December 7, 1941, and ending December 31, 1946.

(2) The term “primary next of kin” with respect to an individual seeking recognition for service under this section means the closest living relative of the individual who was alive during the period of such service.
(f) **Effective Date.**—This section shall take effect 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.