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 WORLD WAR II MERCHANT MARINER SERVICE CONSIDERED TO BE ACTIVE SERVICE BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

2 (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 Defense shall accept the following:

3 (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 recognition on the basis of applicable Social Security Ad-
ministration records submitted for or by the individual, together with validated testimony given by the individual or the primary next of kin of the individual 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 unavailable 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 period 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 period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946, the Secretary shall recognize masters of seagoing vessels or other officers in command 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 Defense 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 subsection (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 sub-
section.

(d) DETERMINATION OF COASTWISE MERCHANT
SEAMAN.—The Secretary of Defense 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) DEFINITION OF PRIMARY NEXT OF KIN.—In this
section, 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.