

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT

119-33

OFFERED BY MR. WEBER OF TEXAS

At the end of subtitle B of title XVII, insert the following new section:

1 **SEC. 17___. PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFIT PROGRAM**
2 **EXPANSION.**

3 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the
4 “Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro Public
5 Safety Officers’ Benefit Program Expansion Act of 2026”.

6 (b) **ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION FOR PUBLIC**
7 **SAFETY OFFICER BENEFITS.**—

8 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 1205 of title I of the
9 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of
10 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10285) is amended—

11 (A) in subsection (e)(2)(E), by inserting “,
12 including whether the delay is due to the inaction
13 of the claimant or an agency from which
14 information is required” after “basis for delay”;
15 and

16 (B) by adding at the end the following:

17 “(f) **NOTICE AND INTERIM BENEFITS.**—

1 “(1) NOTICE OF MISSING INFORMATION.—Not
2 later than 90 calendar days after receiving a claim
3 filed under this subpart, the Bureau shall notify the
4 claimant or the relevant agency of any missing infor-
5 mation required to process the claim.

6 “(2) NOTICE OF DETERMINATION.—

7 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270
8 calendar days after receiving all information re-
9 quired to process the claim, the Bureau shall
10 inform the claimant of the Bureau’s final, ap-
11 pealable determination as to the claimant’s ben-
12 efit eligibility.

13 “(B) INTERIM BENEFITS AS NOTICE.—
14 Provision of interim benefits under section
15 1201(c) shall be deemed to be notice under sub-
16 paragraph (A).

17 “(3) INTERIM BENEFITS.—

18 “(A) ENTITLEMENT.—If the Bureau fails
19 to inform a claimant of the Bureau’s deter-
20 mination on or before the date that is 270 cal-
21 endar days after receiving all information re-
22 quired to process the claim, the Bureau shall
23 issue a single interim benefit payment with re-
24 spect to the claim, payable only to—

1 “(i) a claimant whose status as an eli-
2 gible beneficiary is undisputed; or

3 “(ii) if beneficiary status remains un-
4 resolved, an escrow or fiduciary account,
5 pending final determination under section
6 1201.

7 “(B) RESCISSION OR REPAYMENT.—Any
8 interim benefits paid under this subsection—

9 “(i) shall be credited against any final
10 benefit determination made under section
11 1201;

12 “(ii) shall not be subject to
13 recoupment or affirmative repayment by
14 the Bureau, except in cases of fraud or
15 material misrepresentation; and

16 “(iii) shall not be construed to create
17 an entitlement to benefits if the claimant
18 or decedent is determined to be ineligible
19 under this part.

20 “(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
21 this subsection shall be construed to—

22 “(A) limit the Bureau’s authority to deny
23 a claim for failure to meet statutory eligibility
24 requirements;

1 “(B) alter the determination of eligible
2 beneficiaries under section 1201; or

3 “(C) require payment of interim benefits to
4 multiple claimants if the statute authorizes pay-
5 ment to only 1 or more mutually exclusive bene-
6 ficiaries.

7 “(g) OUTREACH.—The Bureau shall—

8 “(1) conduct outreach efforts on an ongoing
9 basis to ensure that public safety officers and under-
10 served public agencies are aware of the program
11 under this part, including outreach efforts for dis-
12 abled public safety officers; and

13 “(2) include in the outreach efforts under para-
14 graph (1) regular communications with national
15 public safety organizations, public safety agencies,
16 and organizations supporting disabled public safety
17 officers and the families of fallen officers.

18 “(h) SUMMARY OF BACKLOGGED CLAIMS.—Not later
19 than 30 days after publishing the report required under
20 subsection (e)(2), the Bureau shall submit a summary of
21 the information required to be reported under subsection
22 (e)(2)(E) to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate
23 and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Rep-
24 resentatives.

1 “(i) AUDIT OF BACKLOGGED CLAIMS.—On an annual
2 basis, the Comptroller General shall conduct an audit of
3 any pending claims under this part that were submitted
4 to the Bureau more than 1 year before the date on which
5 the audit is commenced, to identify programmatic chal-
6 lenges to the timely processing of death, disability, and
7 educational assistance claims. As part of the audit, the
8 Comptroller General shall also review—

9 “(1) where the claim is in the determination
10 process;

11 “(2) the reasons for delay, including any pro-
12 cesses, such as legal review, that prevent timely pro-
13 cessing of claims;

14 “(3) whether the agency has used its subpoena
15 authority for the claims;

16 “(4) the frequency of outreach to the claimant
17 and efforts to evaluate and improve the effectiveness
18 of outreach and claims assistance efforts;

19 “(5) the efforts of the Bureau of Justice Assist-
20 ance to implement a claims processing manual to en-
21 sure consistency across staff in determining claims;
22 and

23 “(6) efforts to evaluate and improve the effec-
24 tiveness of outreach and claims assistance efforts.”.

1 (2) SUBPOENA REQUIREMENT.—Section
2 1206(b) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe
3 Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10288(b)) is amend-
4 ed—

5 (A) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking “and”
6 at the end;

7 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking the pe-
8 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

9 (C) by adding at the end the following:

10 “(3) with respect to information or documenta-
11 tion in the possession of a public agency that the
12 Bureau has determined is necessary to adjudicate
13 the claim that the public agency has failed to pro-
14 vide by the date that is 30 days after the date of
15 the Bureau’s or the claimant’s request to provide the
16 information or documentation, shall issue a sub-
17 poena to the public agency to obtain the information
18 or documentation, unless the Bureau has approved
19 an extension not exceeding 60 days.”.

20 (3) DEFINITIONS.—

21 (A) IN GENERAL.—Section 1204 of the
22 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of
23 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10284) is amended—

24 (i) in paragraph (4)(B)(ii), by striking
25 “parapalegic” and inserting “paraplegic”;

1 (ii) by redesignating paragraphs (8)
2 through (14) as paragraphs (9) through
3 (15), respectively; and

4 (iii) by inserting after paragraph (7)
5 the following:

6 “(8) ‘gainful work’ means gainful work activity,
7 as defined in section 32.23 of title 28, Code of Fed-
8 eral Regulations, or successor regulation;”.

9 (B) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

10 (i) INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.—Sec-
11 tion 402(l)(4)(C) of the Internal Revenue
12 Code of 1986 is amended—

13 (I) by striking “section
14 1204(9)(A)” and inserting “section
15 1204(14)(A)”; and

16 (II) by striking “(42 U.S.C.
17 3796b(9)(A))” and inserting “(34
18 U.S.C. 10284(14)(A))”.

19 (ii) TITLE 28.—Section 1863(b)(5)(B)
20 of title 28, United States Code, is amended
21 by striking “section 1203(6)” and insert-
22 ing “section 1204”.

23 (c) EXPEDITED PAYMENT FOR VCF OR WTCHP DE-
24 TERMINATIONS.—Section 1205(b) of title I of the Omni-
25 bus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34

1 U.S.C. 10285(b)) is amended by adding at the end the
2 following:

3 “(4) In making determinations under section
4 1201(a), the Bureau shall, absent clear and con-
5 vincing evidence to the contrary, as determined by
6 the Bureau, approve any claim if the September
7 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 (49 U.S.C.
8 40101 note; Public Law 107–42) (commonly re-
9 ferred to as the ‘VCF’) or the World Trade Center
10 Health Program under title XXXIII of the Public
11 Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300mm et seq.) pro-
12 vides a certification of facts that—

13 “(A) the claim is eligible for death benefits
14 under the Victim Compensation Fund; or

15 “(B) the cause of claimant’s death is a
16 World Trade Center Health Program-related
17 condition.”.

18 (d) IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTAIN GAO REC-
19 OMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date
20 of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall en-
21 sure that the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance
22 implements the recommendations provided in the report
23 of the Government Accountability Office entitled “Public
24 Safety Officers’ Benefits Program: Transparency, Claims
25 Assistance, and Program Management Improvements

1 Needed” (GAO–24–105549), published on September 27,
2 2024.

