



(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To direct a physician or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than 48 hours after such physician or nurse practitioner learns of such death, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. EMMER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

To direct a physician or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certify the death of a veteran not later than 48 hours after such physician or nurse practitioner learns of such death, 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 “Veteran Burial Timeli-
5 ness and Death Certificate Accountability Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) States and counties have reported signifi-
4 cant delays in the signing of death certificates for
5 veterans who pass away from natural causes.

6 (2) Such delays, caused by the refusal of, or
7 postponement by, physicians of the Department of
8 Veterans Affairs have, in some cases, lasted as long
9 as eight weeks.

10 (3) Such delays prevent the timely burial of de-
11 ceased veterans and access to survivor benefits.

12 **SEC. 3. TIMELY CERTIFICATION OF THE DEATH OF A VET-**
13 **ERAN.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—

15 (1) VA PHYSICIAN OR NURSE PRACTITIONER.—
16 Subject to paragraph (2), a physician or nurse prac-
17 titioner employed by the Secretary of Veterans Af-
18 fairs who is the primary care provider of a veteran
19 who dies of natural causes shall certify the death of
20 such veteran not later than 48 hours after such phy-
21 sician or nurse practitioner learns of such death.

22 (2) CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER.—If a
23 physician or nurse practitioner described in para-
24 graph (1) cannot comply with such subsection with
25 regards to a death described in such paragraph, a

1 coroner or medical examiner in the jurisdiction
2 where such death occurred may certify such death.

3 (b) REPORT.—One year after the date of the enact-
4 ment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary
5 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of
6 the Senate and House of Representatives a report regard-
7 ing compliance with subsection (a). Such a report shall
8 include, with regards to the year preceding the date of
9 the report, the following elements:

10 (1) The percentage of cases in which a physi-
11 cian or nurse practitioner employed by the Secretary
12 complied with paragraph (1) of such subsection.

13 (2) The number of cases in which such a physi-
14 cian or nurse practitioner could not so comply.

15 (3) The most common reasons why such a phy-
16 sician or nurse practitioner could not so comply.