

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To ensure the transparency and integrity of casualty accounting and benefits and awards for military and civilian personnel during military operations, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BENNET, Mr. GALLEGGO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. KIM, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. ROSEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To ensure the transparency and integrity of casualty accounting and benefits and awards for military and civilian personnel during military operations, 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 “Honoring the Sacrifice
5 of Troops in War Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

2 It is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) every member of the Armed Forces who
4 dies or is wounded in hostilities is entitled to be
5 counted, by name and in number, in the casualty
6 records of the operation in which the member
7 served;

8 (2) the United States Government owes to the
9 fallen, to their families, and to history a complete,
10 honest, and permanent accounting of every member
11 of the Armed Forces killed or wounded in the service
12 of the Nation, and no administrative reclassification
13 may be permitted to obscure the human cost of war;

14 (3) accurate and complete casualty statistics
15 are essential to the accountability of the executive
16 branch to the American people and to the exercise
17 by Congress of its constitutional powers to declare
18 war, to raise and support Armies, to provide and
19 maintain a Navy, and to appropriate funds;

20 (4) no reporting category, accounting method-
21 ology, or assertion that hostilities have ceased may
22 be used to conceal from Congress or the American
23 people the human cost of the military operations of
24 the United States; and

25 (5) no false assertion that hostilities have
26 ceased nor arbitrary termination of the designation

1 of an active contingency operation may be used to
2 deny servicemembers, their families, or Department
3 of Defense civilian employees the benefits and
4 awards they are due for their support to active mili-
5 tary operations.

6 **SEC. 3. CONTINGENCY OPERATION DEFINED.**

7 In this Act, the term “contingency operation” has the
8 meaning given the term in section 101(a)(13) of title 10,
9 United States Code, as amended by section 4 of this Act.

10 **SEC. 4. INTEGRITY OF TIME PERIODS OF CONTINGENCY**
11 **OPERATIONS.**

12 Section 101(a)(13) of title 10, United States Code,
13 is amended—

14 (1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and
15 (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively;

16 (2) by striking “The term” and inserting “(A)
17 The term”; and

18 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
19 paragraph:

20 “(B) The Secretary of Defense may not redes-
21 ignate, rename, or reclassify an ongoing designated
22 contingency operation if the facts and circumstances
23 on the ground at the time and place of the potential
24 reclassification meets the criteria of subparagraph
25 (A)(ii) and involve members of the armed forces in-

1 volved in military actions, operations, or hostilities
2 against the same enemy of the United States or op-
3 posing military force against which the original oper-
4 ation was conducted, including during or following
5 an announced ceasefire, diplomatic negotiation, or
6 change in operational phase.”.

7 **SEC. 5. INTEGRITY OF CASUALTY RECORDS AND STATIS-**
8 **TICS.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 75 of title
10 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end
11 the following new section:

12 **“§ 1472. Casualty records and casualty statistics: in-**
13 **tegrity; prohibition on manipulative re-**
14 **classification**

15 “(a) PUBLIC RECORD AND PROPER ATTRIBUTION OF
16 CASUALTIES.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall publish
17 and update as frequently as practicable statistics about
18 covered casualties and shall ensure that each covered cas-
19 ualty is attributed, in each casualty record and in each
20 publication of casualty statistics of the Department of De-
21 fense (including the Defense Casualty Analysis System),
22 to each specific military operation in support of which the
23 member of the armed forces or civilian official concerned
24 was serving at the time of the casualty.

1 “(2) Except as provided in subsection (b)(2), a cov-
2 ered casualty attributed to a designated military operation
3 shall remain so attributed in the casualty records and cu-
4 mulative casualty statistics of the Department of Defense.
5 The establishment of a successor or additional designated
6 military operation, or of any new or revised reporting cat-
7 egory, shall not operate to remove, transfer, or reduce any
8 attribution previously made.

9 “(b) PROHIBITION ON MANIPULATIVE RECLASSI-
10 FICATION.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the
11 Secretary of Defense may not direct any component of the
12 Department of Defense to modify a casualty record, re-
13 classify a covered casualty, or change the casualty status
14 or operation attribution of a covered casualty, or restart,
15 reset, or rebase any cumulative count of casualties if the
16 basis for doing so is a redesignation, renaming, or reclassi-
17 fication of an ongoing designated contingency operation
18 that—

19 “(A) meets the criteria of section 101(a)(13)(B)
20 of this title; and

21 “(B) involves members of the armed forces in
22 military actions, operations, or hostilities against the
23 same enemy of the United States or opposing mili-
24 tary force against which the original operation was
25 conducted, including during or following periods of

1 an announced ceasefire, diplomatic negotiation, or
2 change in operational phase.

3 “(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply to a modification
4 of a casualty record that—

5 “(A) corrects a demonstrable error of fact con-
6 cerning the individual casualty, including an error as
7 to the identity, unit, duty status, location, or cause
8 of death or injury of the member concerned;

9 “(B) is documented in writing, including the
10 specific facts establishing the error; and

11 “(C) is not based, in whole or in part, on a
12 change in policy, methodology, or the structure or
13 presentation of reporting categories, or on any asser-
14 tion described in subsection (c).

15 “(c) ASSERTED CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES.—A
16 covered casualty may not be excluded from attribution to
17 a designated military operation, and may not be removed
18 or transferred from such an attribution, on the basis of
19 any assertion, determination, announcement, or agree-
20 ment, whether by the President, the Secretary of Defense,
21 any other officer or employee of the United States, or a
22 foreign government, that hostilities associated with the op-
23 eration have ceased, concluded, paused, or diminished, if
24 the facts and circumstances on the ground at the time and
25 place of the potential reclassification met the criteria of

1 section 101(a)(13)(B) of this title and involve members
2 of the armed forces in military actions, operations, or hos-
3 tilities against the same enemy of the United States or
4 opposing military force against which the original oper-
5 ation was conducted.

6 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 “(1) COVERED CASUALTY.—The term ‘covered
8 casualty’ means, with respect to a member of the
9 armed forces—

10 “(A) the death of the member while serv-
11 ing on active duty, or while serving in support
12 of, or in the area of operations of, a designated
13 military operation; or

14 “(B) a wound or injury of the member in-
15 curred in combat operations in the cir-
16 cumstances described in subparagraph (A).

17 “(2) CASUALTY RECORD.—The term ‘casualty
18 record’ means any record of the Department of De-
19 fense documenting the death of a member of the
20 armed forces or civilian official, or a wound or injury
21 of such an individual, including any record in the
22 Defense Casualty Analysis System or any individual
23 casualty report.

24 “(3) DESIGNATED MILITARY OPERATION.—The
25 term ‘designated military operation’ means a mili-

1 tary operation to which the Secretary of Defense or
2 the commander of a command has officially des-
3 ignated a contingency operation under the conditions
4 of section 101(a)(13) of this title.”.

5 (b) SUBCHAPTER HEADING.—The heading of sub-
6 chapter I of chapter 75 of title 10, United States Code,
7 is amended to read as follows: “**SUBCHAPTER I—**
8 **Death Investigations and Casualty Records**”

9 **SEC. 6. RESTORATION OF CASUALTY RECORDS RELATING**
10 **TO OPERATION EPIC FURY.**

11 (a) RESTORATION.—Not later than 30 days after the
12 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense
13 shall restore all casualty records and casualty statistics by
14 the Department of Defense modified since February 28,
15 2026, to comply with section 1472 of title 10, United
16 States Code, as added by section 5 of this Act.

17 (b) NOTICE TO NEXT OF KIN.—Not later than 30
18 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
19 retary of Defense shall provide to the primary next of kin
20 of each deceased or wounded member of the Armed Forces
21 whose casualty record or operation attribution was modi-
22 fied during the covered period written notice of the res-
23 toration of the record or attribution required by subsection
24 (a), and the reason for such restoration.

1 (c) COVERED PERIOD DEFINED.—In this section, the
2 term “covered period” means the period beginning on
3 February 28, 2026, and ending on the date of the enact-
4 ment of this Act.

5 **SEC. 7. INTEGRITY OF BENEFITS AND RECOGNITION DUR-**
6 **ING CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.**

7 Section 991 of title 10, United States Code, is
8 amended—

9 (1) by redesignating subsection (f) as sub-
10 section (g); and

11 (2) by inserting after subsection (e) the fol-
12 lowing new subsection:

13 “(f) PROHIBITION ON ALTERATION OF BENEFIT ELI-
14 GIBILITY BASED ON ADMINISTRATIVE REDESIGNATION
15 OF CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.—(1) The Secretary of
16 Defense may not direct any component of the Department
17 of Defense to modify, adjust, shorten, extend, pause, reset,
18 or otherwise alter any deployment-related benefit eligi-
19 bility if the basis for such modification is solely a redesign-
20 nation, renaming, or reclassification of an ongoing des-
21 ignated contingency operation where the facts and cir-
22 cumstances on the ground at the time and place of poten-
23 tial redesignation meet the criteria of section
24 101(a)(13)(B) of this title and members of the armed
25 forces are involved in military actions, operations, or hos-

1 ilities against the same enemy of the United States or
2 opposing military force against which the original oper-
3 ation was conducted, including during or following periods
4 of an announced ceasefire, temporary cessation of hos-
5 tilities, diplomatic negotiation, or change in operational
6 phase.

7 “(2) For purposes of paragraph (1), deployment-re-
8 lated benefit eligibility determinations shall continue to be
9 calculated as if the original designation of the operation
10 remained in effect, except as provided under paragraph
11 (4).

12 “(3) Administrative changes to the naming, struc-
13 turing, categorization, or classification of an ongoing des-
14 ignated operation shall not be considered a basis to alter
15 the eligibility of any member of the armed forces or civil-
16 ian personnel for any benefit, including awards or decora-
17 tions, veterans’ preference accrual, pay or leave entitle-
18 ment, deployment-related threshold, or contingency mili-
19 tary leave tied to service in that operation.

20 “(4) Nothing in this subsection prohibits adjustments
21 to eligibility windows when such adjustments are—

22 “(A) explicitly required by statute;

23 “(B) necessary due to a substantive change in
24 operational conditions, including commencement of
25 hostilities against a new enemy or opposing force; or

1 “(C) authorized under subsection (a)(3) pursu-
2 ant to a Secretary-approved deployment exception.

3 “(5) In this subsection, the term ‘designated military
4 operation’ means a military operation to which the Sec-
5 retary of Defense or the commander of a combatant com-
6 mand has officially designated a contingency operation
7 under the conditions of section 101(a)(13) of this title.”.

8 **SEC. 8. RESTORATION OF BENEFITS AND RECOGNITION**
9 **FOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL**
10 **SUPPORT TO OPERATION EPIC FURY.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the
12 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense
13 shall restore all covered benefits to members of the Armed
14 Services and civilian personnel who supported covered
15 military operations since February 28, 2026, in order to
16 comply with subsection (f) of section 991 of title 10,
17 United States Code, as added by section 7 of this Act.

18 (b) NOTICE TO AFFECTED PERSONNEL.—Not later
19 than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,
20 the Secretary of Defense shall provide to each member of
21 the Armed Forces or civilian personnel whose covered ben-
22 efits were modified during the covered period written no-
23 tice of the restoration of benefits required by subsection
24 (a), and of the reason for such restoration.

25 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) COVERED BENEFITS.—The term “covered
2 benefits” means benefits to which members of the
3 Armed Forces and civilian personnel who support
4 covered military operations are entitled, including
5 Department of Defense awards or decorations, vet-
6 erans’ preference accrual, contingency military leave,
7 or other benefits associated with special pay, leave,
8 and tax authorities in titles 10, 37, and 5, United
9 States Code, the Department of State Standardized
10 Regulations, Internal Revenue Service combat zone
11 regulations, and Office of Personnel Management
12 policies that are triggered by the statutory definition
13 of a contingency operation.

14 (2) COVERED PERIOD.—The term “covered pe-
15 riod” means the period beginning on February 28,
16 2026, and ending on the date of the enactment of
17 this Act.

18 (3) COVERED MILITARY OPERATIONS.—The
19 term “covered military operations” means United
20 States military activities against Iran from February
21 28, 2026, until the date of the enactment of this
22 Act.