

for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417), as amended by section 531 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112-81), by extending the authority to conduct programs on career flexibility to December 31, 2018, with a deadline to return all participants to active duty by no later than December 31, 2021, adjusting interim and final report due dates to reflect the extended authority and deadline, and by requiring certain additional elements of information in the final reports.

Sense of Senate on validated gender-neutral occupational standards for all military occupations (sec. 523)

The committee recommends a provision that would express the sense of the Senate concerning the development of validated gender-neutral occupational standards pursuant to the ongoing process of reviewing and opening positions and occupations to women that are currently closed.

Comptroller General of the United States report on impact of certain mental and physical trauma on discharges from military service for misconduct (sec. 524)

The committee recommends a provision that would require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit a report on the impact of mental and physical trauma relating to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, behavioral health matters not related to PTSD, and other neurological combat traumas on the discharge of servicemembers for misconduct.

Sense of Senate on upgrade of characterization of discharge of certain Vietnam era members of the Armed Forces (sec. 525)

The committee recommends a provision that would express the sense of the Senate that Boards for Correction of Military Records, when considering a request for correction of a less-than-honorable discharge issued to a servicemember who served during the Vietnam era, should take into account whether the veteran was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of such service.

Furthermore, the committee directs the Secretary of Defense to report within 180 days on the plans of the military departments to address requests for upgrades of discharges of Vietnam era members of the Armed Forces who may have suffered from service-related PTSD. The report shall include the following elements:

(1) Guidance to Boards for Correction of Military Records and Discharge Review Boards regarding the application of medically appropriate standards to evaluate discharge upgrade applications based in whole or in part on PTSD or other mental health conditions;

(2) Guidance to Boards for Correction of Military Records and Discharge Review Boards on use of information in military service records and consideration of post-discharge diagnoses of PTSD that are related to their military service that the boards may consider when evaluating a request for an upgrade of a discharge, and consideration of waiving any statute of limita-

tions for either new applicants or those previously denied for upgrade applications covered by this section;

(3) The feasibility of use of video conference capabilities by Boards for Correction of Military Records and Discharge Review Boards, and other initiatives to increase the number of in-person hearings granted;

(4) A resourcing plan for the timely consideration of applications from all eligible individuals;

(5) Outreach initiatives to those eligible to seek a discharge upgrade and available pro bono legal services to assist them;

(6) Information provided concerning the right to judicial review and the availability of free legal services, such as those established in collaboration with the Department of Justice's Access to Justice Initiative, in letters from the Boards advising applicants of adverse decisions; and

(7) Compliance with the requirement for inclusion in membership of the Boards for Correction of Military Records and Discharge Review Boards of a physician, clinical psychologist, or psychiatrist when adjudicating applications based in whole or in part on PTSD or other medical condition.

Subtitle D—Member Education and Training

Enhancement of authority for members of the Armed Forces to obtain professional credentials (sec. 531)

The committee recommends a provision that would amend section 215 of title 10, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, with respect to the Coast Guard when it is not operating as a service of the Navy, to carry out a program to enable members of the Armed Forces to obtain professional credentials while they are serving that relate to training and skills acquired during military service.

Authority for Joint Special Operations University to award degrees (sec. 532)

The committee recommends a provision that would amend chapter 108 of title 10, United States Code, to authorize the President of the Joint Special Operations University to confer appropriate degrees upon graduates who meet degree requirements. A degree could not be conferred unless the Secretary of Education has recommended approval of the degree in accordance with the Federal Policy Governing Granting of Academic Degrees by Federal Agencies, and the Joint Special Operations University is accredited by the appropriate civilian academic accrediting agency or organization to award the degree.

Enhancement of information provided to members of the Armed Forces and veterans regarding use of Post-9/11 Educational Assistance and Federal financial aid through Transition Assistance Program (sec. 533)

The committee recommends a provision that would require the Secretary of Defense, by no later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, to provide additional information to servicemembers in the transition assistance program concerning

1 **SEC. 525. SENSE OF SENATE ON UPGRADE OF CHARACTER-**
2 **IZATION OF DISCHARGE OF CERTAIN VIET-**
3 **NAM ERA MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

4 (a) **SENSE OF SENATE.**—It is the sense of the Senate
5 that, when considering a request for correction of a less-
6 than-honorable discharge issued to a member of the
7 Armed Forces during the Vietnam era, the Boards for
8 Correction of Military Records—

9 (1) should take into account whether the vet-
10 eran—

11 (A) served in the Republic of Vietnam dur-
12 ing the Vietnam era; and

13 (B) following such service, was diagnosed
14 with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a re-
15 sult of such service after Post-Traumatic Stress
16 Disorder was included in the Diagnostic and
17 Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the
18 American Psychiatric Association; and

19 (2) if the veteran meets the criteria specified in
20 paragraph (1), should give all due consideration to
21 an upgrade of characterization of discharge.

22 (b) **VIETNAM ERA DEFINED.**—In this section, the
23 term “Vietnam era” has the meaning given that term in
24 section 101(29) of title 38, United States Code.