

## EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1997 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 105-33 effective Oct. 1, 1997, except as otherwise provided in title XI of Pub. L. 105-33, see section 11721 of Pub. L. 105-33, set out as a note under section 4246 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure.

**§ 14408. Relation to other laws**

The provisions of this chapter supersede other Federal laws (including laws enacted after April 30, 1997) except to the extent such laws specifically supersede the provisions of this chapter.

(Pub. L. 105-12, §10, Apr. 30, 1997, 111 Stat. 29.)

## REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 105-12, Apr. 30, 1997, 111 Stat. 23, known as the Assisted Suicide Funding Restriction Act of 1997, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 14401 of this title and Tables.

**CHAPTER 139—VOLUNTEER PROTECTION**

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**§ 14501. Findings and purpose****(a) Findings**

The Congress finds and declares that—

(1) the willingness of volunteers to offer their services is deterred by the potential for liability actions against them;

(2) as a result, many nonprofit public and private organizations and governmental entities, including voluntary associations, social service agencies, educational institutions, and other civic programs, have been adversely affected by the withdrawal of volunteers from boards of directors and service in other capacities;

(3) the contribution of these programs to their communities is thereby diminished, resulting in fewer and higher cost programs than would be obtainable if volunteers were participating;

(4) because Federal funds are expended on useful and cost-effective social service programs, many of which are national in scope, depend heavily on volunteer participation, and represent some of the most successful public-private partnerships, protection of volunteerism through clarification and limitation of the personal liability risks assumed by the volunteer in connection with such participation is an appropriate subject for Federal legislation;

(5) services and goods provided by volunteers and nonprofit organizations would often otherwise be provided by private entities that operate in interstate commerce;

(6) due to high liability costs and unwarranted litigation costs, volunteers and nonprofit organizations face higher costs in purchasing insurance, through interstate insurance markets, to cover their activities; and

(7) clarifying and limiting the liability risk assumed by volunteers is an appropriate subject for Federal legislation because—

(A) of the national scope of the problems created by the legitimate fears of volunteers about frivolous, arbitrary, or capricious lawsuits;

(B) the citizens of the United States depend on, and the Federal Government expends funds on, and provides tax exemptions and other consideration to, numerous social programs that depend on the services of volunteers;

(C) it is in the interest of the Federal Government to encourage the continued operation of volunteer service organizations and contributions of volunteers because the Federal Government lacks the capacity to carry out all of the services provided by such organizations and volunteers; and

(D)(i) liability reform for volunteers, will promote the free flow of goods and services, lessen burdens on interstate commerce and uphold constitutionally protected due process rights; and

(ii) therefore, liability reform is an appropriate use of the powers contained in article 1, section 8, clause 3 of the United States Constitution, and the fourteenth amendment to the United States Constitution.

**(b) Purpose**

The purpose of this chapter is to promote the interests of social service program beneficiaries and taxpayers and to sustain the availability of programs, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities that depend on volunteer contributions by reforming the laws to provide certain protections from liability abuses related to volunteers serving nonprofit organizations and governmental entities.

(Pub. L. 105-19, §2, June 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 218.)

## EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 105-19, §7, June 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 223, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—This Act [enacting this chapter] shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act [June 18, 1997].

“(b) APPLICATION.—This Act applies to any claim for harm caused by an act or omission of a volunteer where that claim is filed on or after the effective date of this Act but only if the harm that is the subject of the claim or the conduct that caused such harm occurred after such effective date.”

## SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 105-19, §1, June 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 218, provided that: “This Act [enacting this chapter] may be cited as the ‘Volunteer Protection Act of 1997.’”

**§ 14502. Preemption and election of State nonapplicability****(a) Preemption**

This chapter preempts the laws of any State to the extent that such laws are inconsistent with this chapter, except that this chapter shall not preempt any State law that provides additional protection from liability relating to volunteers or to any category of volunteers in the performance of services for a nonprofit organization or governmental entity.

**(b) Election of State regarding nonapplicability**

This chapter shall not apply to any civil action in a State court against a volunteer in