

(B) the spouse or parent of an incompetent beneficiary;

(C) a person who has been appointed a fiduciary of the beneficiary by a court of competent jurisdiction; or

(D) being appointed to manage an estate where the annual amount of veterans benefits to be managed by the proposed fiduciary does not exceed \$3,600, as adjusted pursuant to section 5312 of this title.

(d) **TEMPORARY FIDUCIARIES.**—When in the opinion of the Secretary, a temporary fiduciary is needed in order to protect the assets of the beneficiary while a determination of incompetency is being made or appealed or a fiduciary is appealing a determination of misuse, the Secretary may appoint one or more temporary fiduciaries for a period not to exceed 120 days. If a final decision has not been made within 120 days, the Secretary may not continue the appointment of the fiduciary without obtaining a court order for appointment of a guardian, conservator, or other fiduciary under the authority provided in section 5502(b) of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 108-454, title V, § 502(a), Dec. 10, 2004, 118 Stat. 3618.)

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on the first day of the seventh month beginning after Dec. 10, 2004, see section 507(a) of Pub. L. 108-454, set out as an Effective Date of 2004 Amendment note under section 5312 of this title.

§ 5508. Periodic onsite reviews of institutional fiduciaries

In addition to such other reviews of fiduciaries as the Secretary may otherwise conduct, the Secretary shall provide for the periodic onsite review of any person or agency located in the United States that receives the benefits payable under laws administered by the Secretary to another individual pursuant to the appointment of such person or agency as a fiduciary under section 5502(a)(1) of this title in any case in which the fiduciary is serving in that capacity with respect to more than 20 beneficiaries and the total annual amount of such benefits exceeds \$50,000, as adjusted pursuant to section 5312 of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 108-454, title V, § 504(a)(1), Dec. 10, 2004, 118 Stat. 3620.)

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on the first day of the seventh month beginning after Dec. 10, 2004, see section 507(a) of Pub. L. 108-454, set out as an Effective Date of 2004 Amendment note under section 5312 of this title.

§ 5509. Authority to require fiduciary to receive payments at regional offices of the Department when failing to provide required accounting

(a) **REQUIRED REPORTS AND ACCOUNTINGS.**—The Secretary may require a fiduciary to file a report or accounting pursuant to regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

(b) **ACTIONS UPON FAILURE TO FILE.**—In any case in which a fiduciary fails to submit a report or accounting required by the Secretary under subsection (a), the Secretary may, after furnishing notice to such fiduciary and the beneficiary

entitled to such payment of benefits, require that such fiduciary appear in person at a regional office of the Department serving the area in which the beneficiary resides in order to receive such payments.

(Added Pub. L. 108-454, title V, § 504(a)(1), Dec. 10, 2004, 118 Stat. 3621.)

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on the first day of the seventh month beginning after Dec. 10, 2004, see section 507(a) of Pub. L. 108-454, set out as an Effective Date of 2004 Amendment note under section 5312 of this title.

§ 5510. Annual report

The Secretary shall include in the Annual Benefits Report of the Veterans Benefits Administration or the Secretary's Annual Performance and Accountability Report information concerning fiduciaries who have been appointed to receive payments for beneficiaries of the Department. As part of such information, the Secretary shall separately set forth the following:

(1) The number of beneficiaries in each category (veteran, surviving spouse, child, adult disabled child, or parent).

(2) The types of benefit being paid (compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, death pension or benefits payable to a disabled child under chapter 18 of this title).

(3) The total annual amounts and average annual amounts of benefits paid to fiduciaries for each category and type of benefit.

(4) The number of fiduciaries who are the spouse, parent, legal custodian, court-appointed fiduciary, institutional fiduciary, custodian in fact, and supervised direct payees.

(5) The number of cases in which the fiduciary was changed by the Secretary because of a finding that benefits had been misused.

(6) How such cases of misuse of benefits were addressed by the Secretary.

(7) The final disposition of such cases of misuse of benefits, including the number and dollar amount of any benefits reissued to beneficiaries.

(8) The number of fiduciary cases referred to the Office of the Inspector General and the nature of the actions taken by the Inspector General.

(9) The total amount of money recovered by the Government in cases arising from the misuse of benefits by a fiduciary.

(10) Such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(Added Pub. L. 108-454, title V, § 505(a), Dec. 10, 2004, 118 Stat. 3621; amended Pub. L. 111-275, title X, § 1001(l), Oct. 13, 2010, 124 Stat. 2897.)

AMENDMENTS

2010—Pub. L. 111-275, § 1001(l)(1), substituted “following:” for “following: —” in introductory provisions.

Par. (9). Pub. L. 111-275, § 1001(l)(2), substituted “Government” for “government”.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Dec. 10, 2004, see section 507(b)(1) of Pub. L. 108-454, set out as an Effective Date of 2004 Amendment note under section 5312 of this title.

CHAPTER 57—RECORDS AND INVESTIGATIONS

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AMENDMENTS

2015—Pub. L. 114-31, §2(c), July 20, 2015, 129 Stat. 430, added item 5706.

2006—Pub. L. 109-461, title IX, §902(b), Dec. 22, 2006, 120 Stat. 3460, added item for subchapter III and items 5721 to 5728.

1991—Pub. L. 102-54, §14(d)(5)(B), (6)(C), June 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 286, amended table of sections at beginning of chapter as in effect immediately before the enactment of Pub. L. 102-40 by substituting "subpoenas" for "subpenas" in item 3311 and "subpoena" for "subpena" in item 3313.

Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, §402(c)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 239, renumbered items 3301 to 3313 as 5701 to 5713, respectively.

1980—Pub. L. 96-385, title V, §505(b), Oct. 7, 1980, 94 Stat. 1537, added item 3305.

SUBCHAPTER I—RECORDS

§ 5701. Confidential nature of claims

(a) All files, records, reports, and other papers and documents pertaining to any claim under any of the laws administered by the Secretary and the names and addresses of present or former members of the Armed Forces, and their dependents, in the possession of the Department shall be confidential and privileged, and no disclosure thereof shall be made except as provided in this section.

(b) The Secretary shall make disclosure of such files, records, reports, and other papers and documents as are described in subsection (a) of this section as follows:

(1) To a claimant or duly authorized agent or representative of a claimant as to matters concerning the claimant alone when, in the judgment of the Secretary, such disclosure would not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the claimant and to an independent medical expert or experts for an advisory opinion pursuant to section 5109 of this title.

(2) When required by process of a United States court to be produced in any suit or proceeding therein pending.

(3) When required by any department or other agency of the United States Government.

(4) In all proceedings in the nature of an inquest into the mental competency of a claimant.

(5) In any suit or other judicial proceeding when in the judgment of the Secretary such disclosure is deemed necessary and proper.

(6) In connection with any proceeding for the collection of an amount owed to the United States by virtue of a person's participation in any benefit program administered by the Secretary when in the judgment of the Secretary such disclosure is deemed necessary and proper.

(c)(1) The amount of any payment made by the Secretary to any person receiving benefits under a program administered by the Secretary shall be made known to any person who applies for such information.

(2) Any appraisal report or certificate of reasonable value submitted to or prepared by the Secretary in connection with any loan guaranteed, insured, or made under chapter 37 of this title shall be made available to any person who applies for such report or certificate.

(3) Subject to the approval of the President, the Secretary may publish at any time and in any manner any or all information of record pertaining to any claim filed with the Secretary if the Secretary determines that the public interest warrants or requires such publication.

(d) The Secretary as a matter of discretion may authorize an inspection of Department records by duly authorized representatives of recognized organizations.

(e) Except as otherwise specifically provided in this section with respect to certain information, the Secretary may release information, statistics, or reports to individuals or organizations when in the Secretary's judgment such release would serve a useful purpose.

(f) The Secretary may, pursuant to regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, release the name or address, or both, of any present or former member of the Armed Forces, or a dependent of a present or former member of the Armed Forces, (1) to any nonprofit organization if the release is directly connected with the conduct of programs and the utilization of benefits under this title, or (2) to any criminal or civil law enforcement governmental agency or instrumentality charged under applicable law with the protection of the public health or safety if a qualified representative of such agency or instrumentality has made a written request that such name or address be provided for a purpose authorized by law. Any organization or member thereof or other person who, knowing that the use of any name or address released by the Secretary pursuant to the preceding sentence is limited to the purpose specified in such sentence, willfully uses such name or address for a purpose other than those so specified, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and be fined not more than \$5,000 in the case of a first offense and not more than \$20,000 in the case of any subsequent offense.

(g)(1) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, and under regulations which the Sec-