

(Pub. L. 85–857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1235, §3204; Pub. L. 97–258, §3(k)(5), Sept. 13, 1982, 96 Stat. 1065; renumbered §5504, Pub. L. 102–40, title IV, §402(b)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238; Pub. L. 102–83, §4(a)(1), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 403.)

#### AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102–40 renumbered section 3204 of this title as this section.

Pub. L. 102–83 substituted “administered by the Secretary” for “administered by the Veterans’ Administration”.

1982—Pub. L. 97–258 substituted “section 1322(a) of title 31” for “the last proviso of subsection (a) of section 725s of title 31”.

#### **[§ 5505. Repealed. Pub. L. 103–446, title XII, § 1201(g)(4)(A), Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4687]**

Section, added Pub. L. 101–508, title VIII, §8001(a)(1), Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1388–341, §3205; renumbered §5505, Pub. L. 102–40, title IV, §402(b)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238, related to limitation on compensation payments for certain incompetent veterans.

#### **§ 5506. Definition of “fiduciary”**

For purposes of this chapter and chapter 61 of this title, the term “fiduciary” means—

(1) a person who is a guardian, curator, conservator, committee, or person legally vested with the responsibility or care of a claimant (or a claimant’s estate) or of a beneficiary (or a beneficiary’s estate); or

(2) any other person having been appointed in a representative capacity to receive money paid under any of the laws administered by the Secretary for the use and benefit of a minor, incompetent, or other beneficiary.

(Added Pub. L. 108–454, title V, §501(a)(1), Dec. 10, 2004, 118 Stat. 3617.)

#### 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.

#### **§ 5507. Inquiry, investigations, and qualification of fiduciaries**

(a) Any certification of a person for payment of benefits of a beneficiary to that person as such beneficiary’s fiduciary under section 5502 of this title shall be made on the basis of—

(1) an inquiry or investigation by the Secretary of the fitness of that person to serve as fiduciary for that beneficiary, such inquiry or investigation—

(A) to be conducted in advance of such certification;

(B) to the extent practicable, to include a face-to-face interview with such person; and

(C) to the extent practicable, to include a copy of a credit report for such person issued within one year of the date of the proposed appointment;

(2) adequate evidence that certification of that person as fiduciary for that beneficiary is in the interest of such beneficiary (as determined by the Secretary under regulations); and

(3) the furnishing of any bond that may be required by the Secretary.

(b) As part of any inquiry or investigation of any person under subsection (a), the Secretary shall request information concerning whether that person has been convicted of any offense under Federal or State law which resulted in imprisonment for more than one year. If that person has been convicted of such an offense, the Secretary may certify the person as a fiduciary only if the Secretary finds that the person is an appropriate person to act as fiduciary for the beneficiary concerned under the circumstances.

(c)(1) In the case of a proposed fiduciary described in paragraph (2), the Secretary, in conducting an inquiry or investigation under subsection (a)(1), may carry out such inquiry or investigation on an expedited basis that may include waiver of any specific requirement relating to such inquiry or investigation, including the otherwise applicable provisions of subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of such subsection. Any such inquiry or investigation carried out on such an expedited basis shall be carried out under regulations prescribed for purposes of this section.

(2) Paragraph (1) applies with respect to a proposed fiduciary who is—

(A) the parent (natural, adopted, or step-parent) of a beneficiary who is a minor;

(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