

which read as follows: “WRONGFUL WITHHOLDING.—Except as provided in subsections (a) through (d), any person who knowingly and willfully withholds from the personnel file of a missing person any information relating to the disappearance or whereabouts and status of a missing person shall be fined as provided in title 18 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.”

§ 1507. Recommendation of status of death

(a) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO RECOMMENDATION.—A board appointed under section 1503, 1504, or 1505 of this title may not recommend that a person be declared dead unless—

(1) credible evidence exists to suggest that the person is dead;

(2) the United States possesses no credible evidence that suggests that the person is alive; and

(3) representatives of the United States—

(A) have made a complete search of the area where the person was last seen (unless, after making a good faith effort to obtain access to such area, such representatives are not granted such access); and

(B) have examined the records of the government or entity having control over the area where the person was last seen (unless, after making a good faith effort to obtain access to such records, such representatives are not granted such access).

(b) SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION ON DEATH.—If a board appointed under section 1503, 1504, or 1505 of this title makes a recommendation that a missing person be declared dead, the board shall include in the report of the board with respect to the person under that section the following:

(1) A detailed description of the location where the death occurred.

(2) A statement of the date on which the death occurred.

(3) A description of the location of the body, if recovered.

(4) If the body has been recovered and is not identifiable through visual means, a certification by a forensic pathologist that the body recovered is that of the missing person. In determining whether to make such a certification, the forensic pathologist shall consider, as determined necessary by the Secretary of the military department concerned, additional evidence and information provided by appropriate specialists in forensic medicine or other appropriate medical sciences.

(Added Pub. L. 104-106, div. A, title V, § 569(b)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 347; amended Pub. L. 104-201, div. A, title V, § 578(e), Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 2537; Pub. L. 105-85, div. A, title V, § 599(c), Nov. 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 1768.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1997—Subsec. (b)(3), (4). Pub. L. 105-85 added pars. (3) and (4).

1996—Subsec. (b)(3), (4). Pub. L. 104-201 struck out pars. (3) and (4) which read as follows:

“(3) A description of the location of the body, if recovered.

“(4) If the body has been recovered and is not identifiable through visual means, a certification by a practitioner of an appropriate forensic science that the body recovered is that of the missing person.”

§ 1508. Judicial review

(a) RIGHT OF REVIEW.—A person who is the primary next of kin (or the previously designated person) of a person who is the subject of a finding described in subsection (b) may obtain judicial review in a United States district court of that finding, but only on the basis of a claim that there is information that could affect the status of the missing person’s case that was not adequately considered during the administrative review process under this chapter. Any such review shall be as provided in section 706 of title 5.

(b) FINDINGS FOR WHICH JUDICIAL REVIEW MAY BE SOUGHT.—Subsection (a) applies to the following findings:

(1) A finding by a board appointed under section 1504 or 1505 of this title that a missing person is dead.

(2) A finding by a board appointed under section 1509 of this title that confirms that a missing person formerly declared dead is in fact dead.

(c) SUBSEQUENT REVIEW.—Appeals from a decision of the district court shall be taken to the appropriate United States court of appeals and to the Supreme Court as provided by law.

(Added Pub. L. 104-106, div. A, title V, § 569(b)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 348.)

§ 1509. Program to resolve missing person cases

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED; COVERED CONFLICTS.—The Secretary of Defense shall implement a comprehensive, coordinated, integrated, and fully resourced program to account for persons described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 1513(1) of this title who are unaccounted for from the following conflicts:

(1) World War II during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946, including members of the armed forces who were lost during flight operations in the Pacific theater of operations covered by section 576 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65; 10 U.S.C. 1501 note).

(2) The Cold War during the period beginning on September 2, 1945, and ending on August 21, 1991.

(3) The Korean War during the period beginning on June 27, 1950, and ending on January 31, 1955.

(4) The Indochina War era during the period beginning on July 8, 1959, and ending on May 15, 1975.

(5) The Persian Gulf War during the period beginning on August 2, 1990, and ending on February 28, 1991.

(6) Such other conflicts in which members of the armed forces served as the Secretary of Defense may designate.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall implement the program within the Department of Defense through the designated Agency Director.

(2)(A) The Secretary shall assign or detail to the designated Defense Agency on a full-time basis a senior medical examiner from the personnel of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner

System. The primary duties of the medical examiner so assigned or detailed shall include the identification of remains in support of the function of the designated Agency Director to account for unaccounted for persons covered by subsection (a).

(B) In carrying out functions under this chapter, the medical examiner so assigned or detailed shall report to the designated Agency Director.

(C) The medical examiner so assigned or detailed shall—

- (i) exercise scientific identification authority;
- (ii) establish identification and laboratory policy consistent with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System; and
- (iii) advise the designated Agency Director on forensic science disciplines.

(D) Nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted as affecting the authority of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner under section 1471 of this title.

(c) TREATMENT AS MISSING PERSONS.—Each unaccounted for person covered by subsection (a) shall be considered to be a missing person for purposes of the applicability of other provisions of this chapter to the person.

(d) ESTABLISHMENT OF PERSONNEL FILES; CENTRALIZED DATABASE.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that a personnel file is established and maintained for each person covered by subsection (a) if the Secretary—

- (A) possesses any information relevant to the status of the person; or
- (B) receives any new information regarding the missing person as provided in subsection (e).

(2) The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that each file established under this subsection contains all relevant information pertaining to a person covered by subsection (a) and is readily accessible to all elements of the department, the combatant commands, and the armed forces involved in the effort to account for the person.

(3) Each file established under this subsection shall be handled in accordance with, and subject to the provisions of, section 1506 of this title in the same manner as applies to the file of a missing person otherwise subject to such section.

(4) The Secretary of Defense shall establish and maintain a single centralized database and case management system containing information on all missing persons for whom a file has been established under this subsection. The database and case management system shall be accessible to all elements of the Department of Defense involved in the search, recovery, identification, and communications phases of the program established by this section.

(e) REVIEW OF STATUS REQUIREMENTS.—(1) If new information (as described in paragraph (3)) is found or received that may be related to one or more unaccounted for persons covered by subsection (a), whether or not such information specifically relates (or may specifically relate) to any particular such unaccounted for person, that information shall be provided to the Secretary of Defense.

(2) Upon receipt of new information under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(A) the information is treated under paragraph (2) of subsection (c) of section 1505 of this title, relating to addition of the information to the personnel file of a person and notification requirements, in the same manner as information received under paragraph (1) under such subsection; and

(B) the information is treated under paragraph (3) of subsection (c) and subsection (d) of such section, relating to a board review under such section, in the same manner as information received under paragraph (1) of such subsection (c).

(3) For purposes of this subsection, new information is information that is credible and that—

(A) is found or received after November 18, 1997, by a United States intelligence agency, by a Department of Defense agency, or by a person specified in section 1504(g) of this title; or

(B) is identified after November 18, 1997, in records of the United States as information that could be relevant to the case of one or more unaccounted for persons covered by subsection (a).

(f) COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS.—(1) In carrying out the program, the designated Agency Director shall ensure coordination with the Secretaries of the military departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the commanders of the combatant commands.

(2) In carrying out the program, the Secretary of Defense shall establish close coordination with the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council staff to enhance the ability of the Department of Defense to account for persons covered by subsection (a).

(3) In carrying out the program, the designated Agency Director shall coordinate all external communications and events associated with the program.

(Added Pub. L. 104–106, div. A, title V, § 569(b)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 348; amended Pub. L. 104–201, div. A, title V, § 578(f)(1), (2)(A), Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 2537; Pub. L. 105–85, div. A, title V, § 599(e), Nov. 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 1769; Pub. L. 106–65, div. A, title X, § 1066(a)(14), Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 771; Pub. L. 111–84, div. A, title V, § 541(a), Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2296; Pub. L. 113–291, div. A, title IX, § 916(d), (f)(1), Dec. 19, 2014, 128 Stat. 3478, 3479.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2014—Pub. L. 113–291, § 916(f)(1), substituted “Program to resolve missing person cases” for “Program to resolve preenactment missing person cases” in section catchline.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 113–291, § 916(d)(1)(A), struck out “PROCESS” after “IMPLEMENTATION” in heading.

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 113–291, § 916(d)(1)(B), substituted “through the designated Agency Director” for “POW/MIA accounting community”.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 113–291, § 916(d)(1)(C), added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which defined “POW/MIA accounting community”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 113–291, § 916(d)(2)(A), inserted “; CENTRALIZED DATABASE” after “FILES” in heading.

Subsec. (d)(4). Pub. L. 113-291, §916(d)(2)(B), added par. (4).

Subsec. (f)(1). Pub. L. 113-291, §916(d)(3)(A), substituted “In carrying out the program, the designated Agency Director shall ensure coordination” for “In establishing and carrying out the program, the Secretary of Defense shall coordinate”.

Subsec. (f)(2). Pub. L. 113-291, §916(d)(3)(B), inserted “staff” after “National Security Council” and struck out “POW/MIA accounting community” after “Department of Defense”.

Subsec. (f)(3). Pub. L. 113-291, §916(d)(3)(C), added par. (3).

2009—Pub. L. 111-84 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section consisted of subssecs. (a) to (d) relating to review of status of missing person cases arising before enactment of this chapter.

1999—Subsec. (a)(2)(A), (B). Pub. L. 106-65 substituted “November 18, 1997,” for “the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998”.

1997—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 105-85, §599(e)(1), added subsec. (a) and struck out former subsec. (a) which read as follows:

“(a) REVIEW OF STATUS.—In the case of an unaccounted for person covered by section 1501(c) of this title who is described in subsection (b), if new information that could change the status of that person is found or received by a United States intelligence agency, by a Department of Defense agency, or by a person specified in section 1504(g) of this title, that information shall be provided to the Secretary of Defense with a request that the Secretary evaluate the information in accordance with sections 1505(c) and 1505(d) of this title.”

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 105-85, §599(e)(2), added subsec. (d).

1996—Pub. L. 104-201, §578(f)(2)(A), struck out “, special interest” after “Preenactment” in section catchline.

Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 104-201, §578(f)(1), redesignated subsec. (d) as (c) and struck out former subsec. (c) which read as follows:

“(c) SPECIAL RULE FOR PERSONS CLASSIFIED AS ‘KIA/BNR’.—In the case of a person described in subsection (b) who was classified as ‘killed in action/body not recovered’, the case of that person may be reviewed under this section only if the new information referred to in subsection (a) is compelling.”

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

IMPLEMENTATION

Pub. L. 111-84, div. A, title V, §541(d), Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2298, provided that:

“(1) PRIORITY.—A priority of the program required by section 1509 of title 10, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), to resolve missing person cases arising before the enactment of chapter 76 of such title by section 569 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996 (Public Law 104-106; 110 Stat. 336) [approved Feb. 10, 1996] shall be the return of missing persons to United States control alive.

“(2) ACCOUNTING FOR GOAL.—In implementing the program, the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the officials specified in subsection (f)(1) of section 1509 of title 10, United States Code, shall provide such funds, personnel, and resources as the Secretary considers appropriate to increase significantly the capability and capacity of the Department of Defense, the Armed Forces, and commanders of the combatant commands to account for missing persons so that, beginning with fiscal year 2015, the POW/MIA accounting community has sufficient resources to ensure that at least 200 missing persons are accounted for under the program annually.

“(3) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) The term ‘accounted for’ has the meaning given such term in section 1513(3)(B) of title 10, United States Code.

“(B) The term ‘POW/MIA accounting community’ has the meaning given such term in section 1509(b)(2) of such title.”

§ 1510. Applicability to Coast Guard

(a) DESIGNATED OFFICER TO HAVE RESPONSIBILITY.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall designate an officer of the Department of Homeland Security to have responsibility within the Department of Homeland Security for matters relating to missing persons who are members of the Coast Guard.

(b) PROCEDURES.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall prescribe procedures for the determination of the status of persons described in section 1501(c) of this title who are members of the Coast Guard and for the collection, analysis, review, and update of information on such persons. To the maximum extent practicable, the procedures prescribed under this section shall be similar to the procedures prescribed by the Secretary of Defense under section 1501(b) of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 104-106, div. A, title V, §569(b)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 349; amended Pub. L. 107-296, title XVII, §1704(b)(1), Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2314.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2002—Pub. L. 107-296 substituted “of Homeland Security” for “of Transportation” wherever appearing.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2002 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 107-296 effective on the date of transfer of the Coast Guard to the Department of Homeland Security, see section 1704(g) of Pub. L. 107-296, set out as a note under section 101 of this title.

§ 1511. Return alive of person declared missing or dead

(a) PAY AND ALLOWANCES.—Any person (except for a person subsequently determined to have been absent without leave or a deserter) in a missing status or declared dead under subchapter VII of chapter 55 of title 5 or chapter 10 of title 37 or by a board appointed under this chapter who is found alive and returned to the control of the United States shall be paid for the full time of the absence of the person while given that status or declared dead under the law and regulations relating to the pay and allowances of persons returning from a missing status.

(b) EFFECT ON GRATUITIES PAID AS A RESULT OF STATUS.—Subsection (a) shall not be interpreted to invalidate or otherwise affect the receipt by any person of a death gratuity or other payment from the United States on behalf of a person referred to in subsection (a) before February 10, 1996.

(Added Pub. L. 104-106, div. A, title V, §569(b)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 349; amended Pub. L. 107-107, div. A, title X, §1048(c)(10), Dec. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 1226.)