

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1988 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 100-687 effective Sept. 1, 1989, see section 401(a) of Pub. L. 100-687, set out as an Effective Date note under section 7251 of this title.

FEE AGREEMENTS

Subsec. (d) of this section not to prevent award of fees and expenses under section 2412(d) of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure, but subsec. (d) of this section inapplicable to such award where fees for the same work are received under both sections and claimant's attorney refunds to claimant amount of smaller fee, see section 506(c) of Pub. L. 102-572, set out as a note under section 2412 of Title 28.

APPLICABILITY TO ATTORNEYS' FEES

Pub. L. 100-687, title IV, § 403, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4122, which provided that the amendment to subsec. (c) of this section by section 104(a) of Pub. L. 100-687 applied only to services of agents and attorneys in cases in which a notice of disagreement was filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs on or after Nov. 18, 1988, was repealed by Pub. L. 107-103, title VI, § 603(b), Dec. 27, 2001, 115 Stat. 999.

[Repeal of section 403 of Pub. L. 100-687, formerly set out above, applicable to any appeal filed with the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims on or after Dec. 27, 2001, or before that date but in which a final decision has not been made under section 7291 of this title as of that date, see section 603(d) of Pub. L. 107-103, set out as a note under section 7251 of this title.]

§ 5905. Penalty for certain acts

Whoever wrongfully withholds from any claimant or beneficiary any part of a benefit or claim allowed and due to the claimant or beneficiary, shall be fined as provided in title 18, or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1239, § 3405; Pub. L. 99-576, title VII, § 701(81), Oct. 28, 1986, 100 Stat. 3298; Pub. L. 100-687, div. A, title I, § 104(b), Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4109; renumbered § 5905 and amended Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, § 402(b)(1), (d)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238, 239; Pub. L. 102-83, § 5(c)(1), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 406; Pub. L. 109-461, title I, § 101(g), Dec. 22, 2006, 120 Stat. 3408.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2006—Pub. L. 109-461 struck out “(1) directly or indirectly solicits, contracts for, charges, or receives, or attempts to solicit, contract for, charge, or receive, any fee or compensation except as provided in sections 5904 or 1984 of this title, or (2)” after “Whoever”.

1991—Pub. L. 102-40 renumbered section 3405 of this title as this section and substituted “5904” for “3404”.

Pub. L. 102-83 substituted “1984” for “784”.

1988—Pub. L. 100-687 substituted “shall be fined as provided in title 18, or imprisoned not more than one year, or both” for “shall be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned at hard labor for not more than two years, or both”.

1986—Pub. L. 99-576 substituted “to the claimant or beneficiary” for “him”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

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§ 5906. Availability of legal assistance at Department facilities

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than three times each year, the Secretary shall facilitate the provision by a qualified legal assistance clinic of pro bono legal assistance described in subsection (c) to eligible individuals at not fewer than one medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or such other facility of the Department as the Secretary considers appropriate, in each State.

(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—For purposes of this section, an eligible individual is—

- (1) any veteran;
- (2) any surviving spouse; or
- (3) any child of a veteran who has died.

(c) PRO BONO LEGAL ASSISTANCE DESCRIBED.—The pro bono legal assistance described in this subsection is the following:

(1) Legal assistance with any program administered by the Secretary.

(2) Legal assistance associated with—

(A) improving the status of a military discharge or characterization of service in the Armed Forces, including through a discharge review board; or

(B) seeking a review of a military record before a board of correction for military or naval records.

(3) Such other legal assistance as the Secretary—

(A) considers appropriate; and

(B) determines may be needed by eligible individuals.

(d) LIMITATION ON USE OF FACILITIES.—Space in a medical center or facility designated under subsection (a) shall be reserved for and may only be used by the following, subject to review and removal from participation by the Secretary:

(1) A veterans service organization or other nonprofit organization.

(2) A legal assistance clinic associated with an accredited law school.

(3) A legal services organization.

(4) A bar association.

(5) Such other attorneys and entities as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(e) LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN RURAL AREAS.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall ensure that pro bono legal assistance is provided under subsection (a) in rural areas.

(f) DEFINITION OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—In this section, the term “veterans service organization” means any organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title V, § 548(a)(1), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3617.)

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

PILOT PROGRAM TO ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT LEGAL ASSISTANCE CLINICS

Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title V, § 548(b)-(e), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3618, provided that:

“(b)(1) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Jan. 1, 2021], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a pilot