

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 and the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 to improve the temporary licensure requirements for contract health care professionals who perform medical disability examinations for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. HUSTED introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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## **A BILL**

To amend the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 and the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 to improve the temporary licensure requirements for contract health care professionals who perform medical disability examinations for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Rural Veterans’ Im-  
3 proved Access to Benefits Act of 2026”.

4 **SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO TEMPORARY LICENSURE RE-**  
5 **QUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACT HEALTH CARE**  
6 **PROFESSIONALS WHO PERFORM MEDICAL**  
7 **DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS FOR THE DE-**  
8 **PARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

9 (a) EXPANSION.—Section 504 of the Veterans’ Bene-  
10 fits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–275; 38  
11 U.S.C. 5101 note), as amended by paragraph (1) of sub-  
12 section (a) of section 2002 of the Johnny Isakson and  
13 David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits  
14 Improvement Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–315; 38  
15 U.S.C. 5101 note), is further amended, subject to the sun-  
16 set in paragraph (4) of such subsection, by striking para-  
17 graph (2) of subsection (c) and inserting the following:

18 “(2) HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL DE-  
19 SCRIBED.—A health care professional described in  
20 this paragraph is a person who is eligible for ap-  
21 pointment to a position in the Veterans Health Ad-  
22 ministration covered by section 7402(b) of title 38,  
23 United States Code, who—

24 “(A) has a current and unrestricted license  
25 to practice the health care profession of the  
26 health care professional;

1           “(B) is not barred from practicing such  
2           health care profession in any State; and

3           “(C) is performing authorized duties for  
4           the Department pursuant to a contract entered  
5           into under subsection (a).”.

6           (b) DELAYED SUNSET OF AMENDMENT.—Paragraph  
7 (4) of subsection (a) of section 2002 of the Johnny Isak-  
8 son and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and  
9 Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–315;  
10 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by striking “On the date  
11 that is five years after the date of the enactment of this  
12 Act” and inserting “On September 30, 2031”.

13           (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (2) of  
14 such subsection is amended by striking “physicians assist-  
15 ants, nurse practitioners, audiologists, and psychologists”  
16 and inserting “health care professionals”.

17           (d) REPORT.—Not later than 15 months after the  
18 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-  
19 erans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’  
20 Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Af-  
21 fairs of the House of Representatives a report regarding  
22 the use of the authority under section 504 of the Veterans’  
23 Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–275;  
24 38 U.S.C. 5101 note), as temporarily amended by section  
25 2002(a)(1) of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D.

1 Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of  
2 2020 (Public Law 116–315; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) and  
3 this section. Such report shall include, with respect to the  
4 one-year period after the date of the enactment of this  
5 Act, the following elements:

6 (1) The number of examinations conducted pur-  
7 suant to a contract under such authority.

8 (2) The cost, timeliness, and legal adequacy of  
9 such examinations, disaggregated by—

10 (A) health care professional; and

11 (B) contract.

12 (3) The number of such examinations con-  
13 ducted in each State, the District of Columbia, or a  
14 Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the  
15 United States.

16 (4) The numbers of each kind of health care  
17 professionals who conducted such examinations.

18 (5) The number of examinations that were erro-  
19 neously conducted by a health care professional—

20 (A) without such a contract; or

21 (B) unauthorized to enter into such a con-  
22 tract.

23 (6) The plan of the Secretary to correct errors  
24 in the use of such authority.