

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to make reforms to the benefits for Public Service Officers, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. RUIZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee  
on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to make reforms to the benefits for Public Service Officers, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “\_\_\_\_\_ Act  
5 of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. AMOUNT OF BENEFIT INCREASED.**

7 Section 1201(a) of the Omnibus Crime Control and  
8 Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10281(a)) is amend-

1 ed in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking  
2 “\$250,000” and inserting “\$500,000”.

3 **SEC. 3. DATE OF DETERMINATION OF AMOUNT OF BEN-**  
4 **EFIT.**

5 (a) **DISABILITY BENEFIT.**—Section 1201(b) of the  
6 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34  
7 U.S.C. 10281(b)) is amended by striking “with respect to  
8 the date on which the catastrophic injury occurred” and  
9 inserting the following: “with respect to the date that a  
10 determination is made to make such payment”.

11 (b) **DEATH BENEFIT.**—Section 1201(i) of the Omni-  
12 bus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34  
13 U.S.C. 10281(i)) is amended by striking “as of the date  
14 of death of such officer” and inserting the following: “as  
15 of the date that a determination is made to make such  
16 payment subsequent to an application”.

17 **SEC. 4. AMOUNT OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.**

18 Section 1212(a)(2) of the Omnibus Crime Control  
19 and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10302(a)(2)) is  
20 amended by striking “shall be computed on the basis set  
21 forth in section 3532 of title 38, United States Code” and  
22 inserting the following: “shall be computed on the basis  
23 set forth in section 1219”.

1 **SEC. 5. COMPUTATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AL-**  
2 **LOWANCE.**

3 Subpart 2 of part L of title I of the Omnibus Crime  
4 Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10301  
5 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 1219. COMPUTATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**  
7 **ALLOWANCE.**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—

9 “(1) MONTHLY RATES.—The financial assist-  
10 ance on behalf of an eligible person who is pursuing  
11 a program of education consisting of institutional  
12 courses shall be paid at the monthly rate of \$2,000  
13 for full-time, \$1,600 for three-quarter-time, or  
14 \$1,160 for half-time pursuit.

15 “(2) LESS THAN HALF-TIME BASIS.—The fi-  
16 nancial assistance on behalf of an eligible person  
17 pursuing a program of education on less than a half-  
18 time basis shall be paid at the rate of the lesser of—

19 “(A) the established charges for tuition  
20 and fees that the educational institution in-  
21 volved requires similarly circumstanced non-  
22 eligible persons enrolled in the same program to  
23 pay; or

24 “(B) \$788 per month for a full-time  
25 course.

1       “(b) TRAINING.—The financial assistance to be paid  
2 on behalf of an eligible person who is pursuing a full-time  
3 program of education which consists of institutional  
4 courses and alternate phases of training in a business or  
5 industrial establishment with the training in the business  
6 or industrial establishment being strictly supplemental to  
7 the institutional portion, shall be computed at the rate of  
8 \$2,000 per month.

9       “(c) FARM COOPERATIVE.—

10       “(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible person who is  
11 enrolled in an educational institution for a ‘farm co-  
12 operative’ program consisting of institutional agri-  
13 cultural courses prescheduled to fall within forty-  
14 four weeks of any period of twelve consecutive  
15 months and who pursues such program on—

16               “(A) a full-time basis (a minimum of ten  
17 clock hours per week or four hundred and forty  
18 clock hours in such year prescheduled to pro-  
19 vide not less than eighty clock hours in any  
20 three-month period),

21               “(B) a three-quarter-time basis (a min-  
22 imum of seven clock hours per week), or

23               “(C) a half-time basis (a minimum of five  
24 clock hours per week),

1       shall be eligible to receive financial assistance at the  
2       appropriate rate provided in paragraph (2) of this  
3       subsection, if such eligible person is concurrently en-  
4       gaged in agricultural employment which is relevant  
5       to such institutional agricultural courses as deter-  
6       mined under standards prescribed by the Attorney  
7       General. In computing the foregoing clock hour re-  
8       quirements there shall be included the time involved  
9       in field trips and individual and group instruction  
10      sponsored and conducted by the educational institu-  
11      tion through a duly authorized instructor of such in-  
12      stitution in which the person is enrolled.

13           “(2) MONTHLY AMOUNTS.—The monthly finan-  
14      cial assistance to be paid on behalf of an eligible  
15      person pursuing a farm cooperative program under  
16      this subpart shall be \$636 for full-time, \$477 for  
17      three-quarter-time, or \$319 for half-time pursuit.

18           “(d) PROGRAMS IN REPUBLIC OF PHILIPPINES.—If  
19      a program of education is pursued by an eligible person  
20      at an institution located in the Republic of the Philippines,  
21      the financial assistance computed for such person under  
22      this section shall be paid at the rate of \$0.50 for each  
23      dollar.

24           “(e) LICENSING OR CERTIFICATION.—

1           “(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (3),  
2           the amount of financial assistance payable under  
3           this subpart for a licensing or certification test de-  
4           scribed in section 3501(a)(5) of title 38, United  
5           States Code, is the lesser of \$2,000 or the fee  
6           charged for the test.

7           “(2) NUMBER OF MONTHS.—The number of  
8           months of entitlement charged in the case of any in-  
9           dividual for such licensing or certification test is  
10          equal to the number (including any fraction) deter-  
11          mined by dividing the total amount paid to such in-  
12          dividual for such test by the full-time monthly insti-  
13          tutional rate of the financial assistance which, except  
14          for paragraph (1), such individual would otherwise  
15          be paid under this subpart.

16          “(3) LIMITATION.—In no event shall payment  
17          of financial assistance under this subsection for such  
18          a test exceed the amount of the individual’s available  
19          entitlement under this subpart.

20          “(f) NATIONAL TESTS FOR ADMISSION.—

21                 “(1) NATIONAL TEST FOR ADMISSOIN.—Subject  
22                 to paragraph (3), the amount of financial assistance  
23                 payable under this subpart for a national test for  
24                 admission or national test providing an opportunity  
25                 for course credit at institutions of higher learning

1 described in section 3501(a)(5) of title 38, United  
2 States Code, is the amount of the fee charged for  
3 the test.

4 “(2) NUMBER OF MONTHS.—The number of  
5 months of entitlement charged in the case of any in-  
6 dividual for a test described in paragraph (1) is  
7 equal to the number (including any fraction) deter-  
8 mined by dividing the total amount of financial as-  
9 sistance paid such individual for such test by the  
10 full-time monthly institutional rate of financial as-  
11 sistance, except for paragraph (1), such individual  
12 would otherwise be paid under this subpart.

13 “(3) LIMITATION.—In no event shall payment  
14 of financial assistance under this subsection for a  
15 test described in paragraph (1) exceed the amount  
16 of the individual’s available entitlement under this  
17 subpart.

18 “(g) DEFINITIONS.—Terms used in this section have  
19 the meanings given such terms in section 3501 of title 38,  
20 United States Code.

21 “(h) ADJUSTMENT FOR INFLATION.—Amounts  
22 under this section shall be indexed annually to the college  
23 tuition and fees component of the Consumer Price Index  
24 for All Urban Consumers.”.

1 **SEC. 6. GAO STUDY.**

2 The Comptroller General of the United States shall  
3 study and identify ways to improve access to and the proc-  
4 essing of claims under the Public Safety Officers' Benefit  
5 program (34 U.S.C. §§ 10281-10308). In particular, the  
6 Comptroller General shall examine:

7 (1) factors that may hinder access to the Public  
8 Safety Officers' Education Assistance benefit, such  
9 as lack of awareness, delays in the application proc-  
10 ess, or the timely processing of deaths and disability  
11 claims; and

12 (2) the extent to which eligibility is commu-  
13 nicated to officers upon employment and to eligible  
14 family members following the loss of a covered offi-  
15 cer.

16 Within 3 years of the date of enactment of this Act, the  
17 Comptroller General shall issue a report, along with any  
18 recommendations, to the Senate Committee on the Judici-  
19 ary; House Judiciary Committee; Senate Committee on  
20 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; and House Com-  
21 mittee on Education and the Workforce