

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To require the United States Coast Guard to implement new rules for Merchant Marine credentialing for veterans and members of the Uniformed Services, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. SULLIVAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the United States Coast Guard to implement new rules for Merchant Marine credentialing for veterans and members of the Uniformed Services, 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 “Military to Mariners
5 Act of 2022”

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
8 ings:

1 (1) The United States Uniformed Services are
2 composed of the world’s most highly trained and
3 professional servicemembers.

4 (2) A robust Merchant Marine and ensuring
5 United States mariners can compete in the global
6 workforce are vital to economic and national secu-
7 rity.

8 (3) Attracting additional trained and
9 credentialed mariners, particularly from active duty
10 servicemembers and military veterans, will support
11 United States national security requirements and
12 provide meaningful, well-paying jobs to United
13 States veterans.

14 (4) There is a need to ensure that the Federal
15 Government has a robust, state of the art, and effi-
16 cient merchant mariner credentialing system to sup-
17 port economic and national security.

18 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
19 gress that—

20 (1) veterans and members of the Uniformed
21 Services who pursue credentialing to join the United
22 States Merchant Marine should receive vigorous sup-
23 port; and

24 (2) it is incumbent upon the regulatory bodies
25 of the United States to streamline regulations to fa-

1 facilitate transition of veterans and members of the
2 Uniformed Services into the United States Merchant
3 Marine to maintain a strong maritime presence in
4 the United States and worldwide.

5 **SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF SEA SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**
6 **FOR MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIALS**
7 **FOR VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE UNI-**
8 **FORMED SERVICES.**

9 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIAL.—The
11 term “merchant mariner credential” has the mean-
12 ing given the term in section 7510 of title 46,
13 United States Code.

14 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
15 the Secretary of the department in which the Coast
16 Guard is operating.

17 (3) UNIFORMED SERVICES.—The term “Uni-
18 formed Services” has the meaning given the term
19 “uniformed services” in section 2101 of title 5,
20 United States Code.

21 (b) REVIEW AND REGULATIONS.—Notwithstanding
22 any other provision of law, not later than 2 years after
23 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

24 (1) review and examine—

1 (A) the requirements and procedures for
2 veterans and members of the Uniformed Serv-
3 ices to receive a merchant mariner credential;

4 (B) the classifications of sea service ac-
5 quired through training and service as a mem-
6 ber of the Uniformed Services and level of
7 equivalence to sea service on merchant vessels;

8 (C) the amount of sea service, including
9 percent of the total time onboard for purposes
10 of equivalent underway service, that will be ac-
11 cepted as required experience for all endorse-
12 ments for applicants for a merchant mariner
13 credential who are veterans or members of the
14 Uniformed Services;

15 (2) provide the availability for a fully internet-
16 based application process for a merchant mariner
17 credential, to the maximum extent practicable; and

18 (3) issue new regulations to—

19 (A) reduce paperwork, delay, and other
20 burdens for applicants for a merchant mariner
21 credential who are veterans and members of the
22 Uniformed Services, and, if determined to be
23 appropriate, increase the acceptable percentages
24 of time equivalent to sea service for such appli-
25 cants; and

1 (B) reduce burdens and create a means of
2 alternative compliance to demonstrate instruc-
3 tor competency for Standards of Training, Cer-
4 tification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
5 courses.

6 (c) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out subsection (b),
7 the Secretary shall consult with the National Merchant
8 Marine Personnel Advisory Committee taking into account
9 the present and future needs of the United States Mer-
10 chant Marine labor workforce.

11 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
12 of enactment of this Act, the Committee on the Marine
13 Transportation System shall submit to the Committee on
14 Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, the
15 Committee on Armed Services of the Senate, the Com-
16 mittee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Rep-
17 resentatives, and the Committee on Armed Services of the
18 House of Representatives, a report that contains an up-
19 date on the activities carried out to implement—

20 (1) the July 2020 report by the Committee on
21 the Marine Transportation System to the White
22 House Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy on
23 the implementation of Executive Order 13860 (84
24 Fed. Reg. 8407; relating to supporting the transition

1 of active duty servicemembers and military veterans
2 into the Merchant Marine); and

3 (2) section 3511 of the National Defense Au-
4 thorization Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–92; 133
5 Stat. 1978).

6 (e) ASSESSMENT OF SKILLBRIDGE FOR EMPLOY-
7 MENT AS A MERCHANT MARINER.—The Secretary of the
8 department in which the Coast Guard is operating, in col-
9 laboration with the Secretary of Defense, shall assess the
10 use of the SkillBridge program of the Department of De-
11 fense as a means for transitioning active duty sea service
12 personnel toward employment as a merchant mariner.