



## **Veterans and Visa Protection Act of 2017: Bill Summary**

Representative Raul Grijalva (D-Arizona) introduced the Veterans and Visa Protection Act of 2017 ([H.R. 1405](#)) in the House on March 3, 2017. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-Illinois) introduced a companion bill in the Senate, Veterans and Visa Protection Act ([S. 1704](#)), on August 2, 2017. This bill would protect most immigrant service members in the U.S. Armed Forces and veterans from deportation and permit certain deported veterans to return to the U.S.

More than [24,000 immigrants](#) were on active duty in the military in 2012. In addition, there are about [94,000 immigrant veterans](#) of the U.S. Armed Forces who have not naturalized. This bill would offer protections from deportation and access to U.S. citizenship to immigrant service member and veterans if they meet certain requirements.

### **Protects Immigrant Service Members and Veterans from Deportation**

- The bill prevents immigrant service members in the U.S. Armed Forces and veterans who have not been convicted of a crime of violence from being deported.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary would need to cancel current removal proceedings of immigrant service members and veterans in the U.S. who were not ordered to be removed due to convictions for a crime of violence or for a crime that endangers national security in which the individual served at least five years in prison.

### **Allows Deported Veterans to Return and be Eligible for U.S. Citizenship and Military Benefits**

- The bill directs the DHS Secretary to establish a program and application procedure within six months (180 days) of the bill's enactment to allow certain deported veterans to return to the U.S. as lawful permanent residents (LPRs).
- A deported veteran who returns to the U.S. pursuant to the bill is eligible for naturalization through his or her service in the U.S. Armed Forces. The bill directs DHS to disregard both the ground on which the deported veteran was removed from the U.S. and any period of absence from the U.S. due to the individual's deportation.
- A deported veteran who returns to the U.S. as a result of the bill is allowed to seek military and veteran benefits for which the individual would have been eligible.
- To qualify, deported veterans must not have been deported due to a conviction for a crime of violence or for a crime that endangers national security in which the individual served at least five years in prison.

### **Creates Safeguards to Identify Immigrant Service Members and Veterans**

- The bill requires that the DHS Secretary identify immigration cases involving immigrant service members and veterans at risk of removal from the U.S.