

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 521

To permit disabled law enforcement officers, customs and border protection officers, firefighters, air traffic controllers, nuclear materials couriers, members of the Capitol Police, members of the Supreme Court Police, employees of the Central Intelligence Agency performing intelligence activities abroad or having specialized security requirements, and diplomatic security special agents of the Department of State to receive retirement benefits in the same manner as if they had not been disabled.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 2021

Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. FITZPATRICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform, and in addition to the Committees on Intelligence (Permanent Select), and Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To permit disabled law enforcement officers, customs and border protection officers, firefighters, air traffic controllers, nuclear materials couriers, members of the Capitol Police, members of the Supreme Court Police, employees of the Central Intelligence Agency performing intelligence activities abroad or having specialized security requirements, and diplomatic security special agents of the Department of State to receive retirement benefits in the same manner as if they had not been disabled.

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 “First Responder Fair
5 Return for Employees on Their Initial Retirement Earned
6 Act of 2021” or the “First Responder Fair RETIRE
7 Act”.

8 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

9 It is the sense of Congress that—

10 (1) it is in the best national and homeland se-
11 curity interests of the United States for Federal
12 agencies to retain the specialized knowledge and ex-
13 perience of individuals who suffer an injury or illness
14 while serving in a covered position (as defined under
15 the amendments made by this Act); and

16 (2) Federal agencies should ensure, to the
17 greatest extent possible, that an individual who can
18 no longer carry out the duties of a covered position,
19 and is reappointed to a position in the civil service
20 that is not a covered position, is reappointed within
21 the same Federal agency, in the same geographic lo-
22 cation, and at a level of pay commensurate to the
23 position which the individual held immediately prior
24 to such injury or illness.

1 **SEC. 3. RETIREMENT FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES.**

2 (a) CSRS.—Section 8336(c) of title 5, United States
3 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

4 “(3)(A) In this paragraph—

5 “(i) the term ‘affected individual’ means an in-
6 dividual covered under this subchapter who—

7 “(I) is performing service in a covered po-
8 sition;

9 “(II) while on duty, becomes ill or is in-
10 jured as a direct result of the performance of
11 such duties before the date on which the indi-
12 vidual becomes entitled to an annuity under
13 paragraph (1) of this subsection or subsection
14 (e), (m), or (n), as applicable;

15 “(III) because of the illness or injury de-
16 scribed in subclause (II), is permanently unable
17 to render useful and efficient service in the em-
18 ployee’s covered position, as determined by the
19 agency in which the individual was serving
20 when such individual incurred the illness or in-
21 jury; and

22 “(IV) is appointed to a position in the civil
23 service that—

24 “(aa) is not a covered position; and

25 “(bb) is within an agency that regu-
26 larly appoints individuals to supervisory or

1 administrative positions related to the ac-
2 tivities of the former covered position of
3 the individual;

4 “(ii) the term ‘covered position’ means a posi-
5 tion as a law enforcement officer, customs and bor-
6 der protection officer, firefighter, air traffic con-
7 troller, nuclear materials courier, member of the
8 Capitol Police, or member of the Supreme Court Po-
9 lice.

10 “(B) Unless an affected individual files an election
11 described in subparagraph (E), creditable service by the
12 affected individual in a position described in subparagraph
13 (A)(i)(IV) shall be treated as creditable service in a cov-
14 ered position for purposes of this chapter and determining
15 the amount to be deducted and withheld from the pay of
16 the affected individual under section 8334.

17 “(C) Subparagraph (B) shall only apply if the af-
18 fected employee transitions to a position described in sub-
19 paragraph (A)(i)(IV) without a break in service exceeding
20 3 days.

21 “(D) The service of an affected individual shall no
22 longer be eligible for treatment under subparagraph (B)
23 if such service occurs after the individual—

1 “(i) is transferred to a supervisory or adminis-
2 trative position related to the activities of the former
3 covered position of the individual; or

4 “(ii) meets the age and service requirements
5 that would subject the individual to mandatory sepa-
6 ration under section 8335 if such individual had re-
7 mained in the former covered position.

8 “(E) In accordance with procedures established by
9 the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, an
10 affected individual may file an election to have any cred-
11 itable service performed by the affected individual treated
12 in accordance with this chapter without regard to subpara-
13 graph (B).

14 “(F) Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed
15 to apply to such affected individual any other pay-related
16 laws or regulations applicable to a covered position.”.

17 (b) FERS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 8412(d) of title 5,
19 United States Code, is amended—

20 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and
21 (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

22 (B) by inserting “(1)” before “An em-
23 ployee”; and

24 (C) by adding at the end the following:

25 “(2)(A) In this paragraph—

1 “(i) the term ‘affected individual’ means an in-
2 dividual covered under this chapter who—

3 “(I) is performing service in a covered po-
4 sition;

5 “(II) while on duty, becomes ill or is in-
6 jured as a direct result of the performance of
7 such duties before the date on which the indi-
8 vidual becomes entitled to an annuity under
9 paragraph (1) of this subsection or subsection
10 (e), as applicable;

11 “(III) because of the illness or injury de-
12 scribed in subclause (II), is permanently unable
13 to render useful and efficient service in the em-
14 ployee’s covered position, as determined by the
15 agency in which the individual was serving
16 when such individual incurred the illness or in-
17 jury; and

18 “(IV) is appointed to a position in the civil
19 service that—

20 “(aa) is not a covered position; and

21 “(bb) is within an agency that regu-
22 larly appoints individuals to supervisory or
23 administrative positions related to the ac-
24 tivities of the former covered position of
25 the individual;

1 “(ii) the term ‘covered position’ means a posi-
2 tion as a law enforcement officer, customs and bor-
3 der protection officer, firefighter, air traffic con-
4 troller, nuclear materials courier, member of the
5 Capitol Police, or member of the Supreme Court Po-
6 lice.

7 “(B) Unless an affected individual files an election
8 described in subparagraph (E), creditable service by the
9 affected individual in a position described in subparagraph
10 (A)(i)(IV) shall be treated as creditable service in a cov-
11 ered position for purposes of this chapter and determining
12 the amount to be deducted and withheld from the pay of
13 the affected individual under section 8422.

14 “(C) Subparagraph (B) shall only apply if the af-
15 fected employee transitions to a position described in sub-
16 paragraph (A)(i)(IV) without a break in service exceeding
17 3 days.

18 “(D) The service of an affected individual shall no
19 longer be eligible for treatment under subparagraph (B)
20 if such service occurs after the individual—

21 “(i) is transferred to a supervisory or adminis-
22 trative position related to the activities of the former
23 covered position of the individual; or

24 “(ii) meets the age and service requirements
25 that would subject the individual to mandatory sepa-

1 ration under section 8425 if such individual had re-
 2 mained in the former covered position.

3 “(E) In accordance with procedures established by
 4 the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, an
 5 affected individual may file an election to have any cred-
 6 itable service performed by the affected individual treated
 7 in accordance with this chapter without regard to subpara-
 8 graph (B).

9 “(F) Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed
 10 to apply to such affected individual any other pay-related
 11 laws or regulations applicable to a covered position.”.

12 (2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMEND-
 13 MENTS.—

14 (A) Chapter 84 of title 5, United States
 15 Code, is amended—

16 (i) in section 8414(b)(3), by inserting
 17 “(1)” after “subsection (d)”;

18 (ii) in section 8415—

19 (I) in subsection (e), in the mat-
 20 ter preceding paragraph (1), by in-
 21 serting “(1)” after “subsection (d)”;
 22 and

23 (II) in subsection (h)(2)(A), by
 24 striking “(d)(2)” and inserting
 25 “(d)(1)(B)”;

1 (iii) in section 8421(a)(1), by insert-
 2 ing “(1)” after “(d)”;

3 (iv) in section 8421a(b)(4)(B)(ii), by
 4 inserting “(1)” after “section 8412(d)”;

5 (v) in section 8425, by inserting “(1)”
 6 after “section 8412(d)” each place it ap-
 7 pears; and

8 (vi) in section 8462(c)(3)(B)(ii), by
 9 inserting “(1)” after “subsection (d)”.

10 (B) Title VIII of the Foreign Service Act
 11 of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4041 et seq.) is amended—

12 (i) in section 805(d)(5) (22 U.S.C.
 13 4045(d)(5)), by inserting “(1)” after “or
 14 8412(d)”;

15 (ii) in section 812(a)(2)(B) (22
 16 U.S.C. 4052(a)(2)(B)), by inserting “(1)”
 17 after “or 8412(d)”.

18 (c) CIA EMPLOYEES.—Section 302 of the Central In-
 19 telligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C. 2152) is
 20 amended by adding at the end the following:

21 “(d) EMPLOYEES DISABLED ON DUTY.—

22 “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

23 “(A) the term ‘affected employee’ means
 24 an employee of the Agency covered under sub-

1 chapter II of chapter 84 of title 5, United
2 States Code, who—

3 “(i) is performing service in a position
4 designated under subsection (a);

5 “(ii) while on duty in the position des-
6 ignated under subsection (a), becomes ill
7 or is injured as a direct result of the per-
8 formance of such duties before the date on
9 which the employee becomes entitled to an
10 annuity under section 233 of this Act or
11 section 8412(d)(1) of title 5, United States
12 Code;

13 “(iii) because of the illness or injury
14 described in clause (ii), is permanently un-
15 able to render useful and efficient service
16 in the employee’s covered position, as de-
17 termined by the Director; and

18 “(iv) is appointed to a position in the
19 civil service that is not a covered position
20 but is within the Agency; and

21 “(B) the term ‘covered position’ means a
22 position as—

23 “(i) a law enforcement officer de-
24 scribed in section 8331(20) or 8401(17) of
25 title 5, United States Code;

1 “(ii) a customs and border protection
2 officer described in section 8331(31) or
3 8401(36) of title 5, United States Code;

4 “(iii) a firefighter described in section
5 8331(21) or 8401(14) of title 5, United
6 States Code;

7 “(iv) an air traffic controller described
8 in section 8331(30) or 8401(35) of title 5,
9 United States Code;

10 “(v) a nuclear materials courier de-
11 scribed in section 8331(27) or 8401(33) of
12 title 5, United States Code;

13 “(vi) a member of the United States
14 Capitol Police;

15 “(vii) a member of the Supreme Court
16 Police;

17 “(viii) an affected employee; or

18 “(ix) a special agent described in sec-
19 tion 804(15) of the Foreign Service Act of
20 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4044(15)).

21 “(2) TREATMENT OF SERVICE AFTER DIS-
22 ABILITY.—Unless an affected employee files an elec-
23 tion described in paragraph (3), creditable service by
24 the affected employee in a position described in
25 paragraph (1)(A)(iv) shall be treated as creditable

1 service in a covered position for purposes of this Act
2 and chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code, in-
3 cluding eligibility for an annuity under section 233
4 of this Act or 8412(d)(1) of title 5, United States
5 Code, and determining the amount to be deducted
6 and withheld from the pay of the affected employee
7 under section 8422 of title 5, United States Code.

8 “(3) BREAK IN SERVICE.—Paragraph (2) shall
9 only apply if the affected employee transitions to a
10 position described in paragraph (1)(A)(iv) without a
11 break in service exceeding 3 days.

12 “(4) LIMITATION ON TREATMENT OF SERV-
13 ICE.—The service of an affected employee shall no
14 longer be eligible for treatment under paragraph (2)
15 if such service occurs after the employee is trans-
16 ferred to a supervisory or administrative position re-
17 lated to the activities of the former covered position
18 of the employee.

19 “(5) OPT OUT.—An affected employee may file
20 an election to have any creditable service performed
21 by the affected employee treated in accordance with
22 chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code, without
23 regard to paragraph (2).”.

24 (d) FOREIGN SERVICE RETIREMENT AND DIS-
25 ABILITY SYSTEM.—Section 806(a)(6) of the Foreign Serv-

1 ice Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4046(a)(6)) is amended by
2 adding at the end the following:

3 “(D)(i) In this subparagraph—

4 “(I) the term ‘affected special agent’ means an
5 individual covered under this subchapter who—

6 “(aa) is performing service as a special
7 agent;

8 “(bb) while on duty as a special agent, be-
9 comes ill or is injured as a direct result of the
10 performance of such duties before the date on
11 which the individual becomes entitled to an an-
12 nuity under section 811;

13 “(cc) because of the illness or injury de-
14 scribed in item (bb), is permanently unable to
15 render useful and efficient service in the em-
16 ployee’s covered position, as determined by the
17 Secretary; and

18 “(dd) is appointed to a position in the For-
19 eign Service that is not a covered position; and

20 “(II) the term ‘covered position’ means a posi-
21 tion as—

22 “(aa) a law enforcement officer described
23 in section 8331(20) or 8401(17) of title 5,
24 United States Code;

1 “(bb) a customs and border protection offi-
2 cer described in section 8331(31) or 8401(36)
3 of title 5, United States Code;

4 “(cc) a firefighter described in section
5 8331(21) or 8401(14) of title 5, United States
6 Code;

7 “(dd) an air traffic controller described in
8 section 8331(30) or 8401(35) of title 5, United
9 States Code;

10 “(ee) a nuclear materials courier described
11 in section 8331(27) or 8401(33) of title 5,
12 United States Code;

13 “(ff) a member of the United States Cap-
14 itol Police;

15 “(gg) a member of the Supreme Court Po-
16 lice;

17 “(hh) an employee of the Agency des-
18 ignated under section 302(a) of the Central In-
19 telligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C.
20 2152(a)); or

21 “(ii) a special agent.

22 “(ii) Unless an affected special agent files an election
23 described in clause (iv), creditable service by the affected
24 special agent in a position described in clause (i)(I)(dd)
25 shall be treated as creditable service as a special agent

1 for purposes of this subchapter, including determining the
2 amount to be deducted and withheld from the pay of the
3 individual under section 805.

4 “(iii) Clause (ii) shall only apply if the special agent
5 transitions to a position described in clause (i)(I)(dd)
6 without a break in service exceeding 3 days.

7 “(iv) The service of an affected employee shall no
8 longer be eligible for treatment under clause (ii) if such
9 service occurs after the employee is transferred to a super-
10 visory or administrative position related to the activities
11 of the former covered position of the employee.

12 “(v) In accordance with procedures established by the
13 Secretary, an affected special agent may file an election
14 to have any creditable service performed by the affected
15 special agent treated in accordance with this subchapter,
16 without regard to clause (ii).”.

17 (e) IMPLEMENTATION.—

18 (1) OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.—

19 Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment
20 of this Act, the Director of the Office of Personnel
21 Management shall promulgate regulations to carry
22 out the amendments made by subsections (a) and
23 (b).

24 (2) CIA EMPLOYEES.—The Director of the
25 Central Intelligence Agency shall promulgate regula-

1 tions to carry out the amendment made by sub-
2 section (c).

3 (3) FOREIGN SERVICE RETIREMENT AND DIS-
4 ABILITY SYSTEM.—The Secretary of State shall pro-
5 mulgate regulations to carry out the amendment
6 made by subsection (d).

7 (4) AGENCY CERTIFICATION.—The regulations
8 promulgated to carry out the amendments made by
9 this Act shall include a requirement that the head
10 of the agency at which an affected employee or spe-
11 cial agent (as the case may be) incurred the applica-
12 ble illness or injury certifies that such illness or in-
13 jury—

14 (A) was incurred in the course of the em-
15 ployee's or special agent's duties; and

16 (B) permanently precludes the employee or
17 special agent from rendering useful and effi-
18 cient service in the covered position but would
19 not preclude the employee or special agent from
20 continuing to serve in the Federal service.

21 (5) AGENCY REAPPOINTMENT.—The regula-
22 tions promulgated to carry out the amendments
23 made by this Act shall ensure that, to the greatest
24 extent possible, the head of each agency appoints af-
25 fected employees or special agents to supervisory or

1 administrative positions related to the activities of
2 the former covered position of the employee or spe-
3 cial agent.

4 (6) TREATMENT OF SERVICE.—The regulations
5 promulgated to carry out the amendments made by
6 this Act shall ensure that the creditable service of an
7 affected employee or special agent (as the case may
8 be) that is not in a covered position pursuant to an
9 election made under such amendments shall be
10 treated as the same type of service as the covered
11 position in which the employee or agent suffered the
12 qualifying illness or injury.

13 (f) EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY.—The amend-
14 ments made by this Act—

15 (1) shall take effect on the date of enactment
16 of this Act; and

17 (2) shall apply to an individual who suffers an
18 illness or injury described in section
19 8336(c)(3)(A)(i)(II) or section 8412(d)(2)(A)(i)(II)
20 of title 5, United States Code, as amended by this
21 section, section 302(d)(1)(A)(ii) of the Central Intel-
22 ligence Agency Retirement Act, as amended by this
23 section, or section 806(a)(6)(D)(i)(I)(bb) of the For-
24 eign Service Act of 1980, as amended by this sec-

1 tion, on or after the date that is 2 years after the
2 date of enactment of this Act.

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