

110<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# S. 2536

To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from collecting certain debts to the United States in the case of veterans who die as a result of a service-connected disability incurred or aggravated on active duty in a combat zone, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 22 (legislative day, JANUARY 3), 2008

Mrs. HUTCHISON introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from collecting certain debts to the United States in the case of veterans who die as a result of a service-connected disability incurred or aggravated on active duty in a combat zone, 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 “Combat Veterans Debt  
5 Elimination Act of 2008”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON COLLECTION OF CERTAIN IN-**  
2 **DEBTEDNESS OF VETERANS WHO DIE OF**  
3 **SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES ARISING**  
4 **FROM SERVICE ON ACTIVE DUTY IN A COM-**  
5 **BAT ZONE.**

6 (a) AUTHORITY.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 53 of title 38,  
8 United States Code, is amended by inserting after  
9 section 5302 the following new section:

10 **“§ 5302A. Prohibition on collection of indebtedness:**  
11  **certain debts of veterans who die of serv-**  
12  **ice-connected disability incurred or ag-**  
13  **gravated on active duty in a combat zone**

14 “(a) PROHIBITION.—The Secretary may not collect  
15 all or any part of an amount owed to the United States  
16 by a veteran described in subsection (b) under any pro-  
17 gram under the laws administered by the Secretary (other  
18 than a program referred to in subsection (c)) if the Sec-  
19 retary determines, in the Secretary’s discretion, that the  
20 termination of collection is in the best interest of the  
21 United States.

22 “(b) COVERED VETERANS.—A veteran described in  
23 this subsection is any veteran who dies as a result of a  
24 service-connected disability incurred or aggravated while  
25 serving in a theater of combat operations (as determined  
26 by the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of De-

1 fense) in a war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat  
 2 against a hostile force during a period of hostilities (as  
 3 that term is defined in section 1712A(a)(2)(B) of this  
 4 title) after September 11, 2001.

5       “(c) INAPPLICABILITY TO HOUSING AND SMALL  
 6 BUSINESS BENEFIT PROGRAMS.—The authority in sub-  
 7 section (a) shall not apply to any amounts owed the  
 8 United States under any program carried out under chap-  
 9 ter 37 of this title.”.

10           (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-  
 11 tions at the beginning of chapter 53 of such title is  
 12 amended by inserting after the item relating to sec-  
 13 tion 5302 the following new item:

“5302A. Prohibition on collection of indebtedness: certain debts of veterans who  
 die of service-connected disability incurred or aggravated on ac-  
 tive duty in a combat zone.”.

14       (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by  
 15 this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment  
 16 of this Act, and shall apply with respect to collections of  
 17 indebtedness of veterans who die on or after September  
 18 11, 2001.

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