

SEC. 604. FAMILY SUBSISTENCE SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCE FOR LOW-INCOME MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCE REQUIRED- (1) Chapter 7 of title 37, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 402 the following new section:

Sec. 402a. Supplemental subsistence allowance for low-income members with dependents

(a) SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCE REQUIRED- (1) The Secretary concerned shall increase the basic allowance for subsistence to which a member of the armed forces described in subsection (b) is otherwise entitled under section 402 of this title by an amount (in this section referred to as the 'supplemental subsistence allowance') designed to remove the member's household from eligibility for benefits under the food stamp program.

(2) The supplemental subsistence allowance may not exceed \$500 per month. In establishing the amount of the supplemental subsistence allowance to be paid an eligible member under this paragraph, the Secretary shall take into consideration the amount of the basic allowance for housing that the member receives under section 403 of this title or would otherwise receive under such section, in the case of a member who is not entitled to that allowance as a result of assignment to quarters of the United States or a housing facility under the jurisdiction of a uniformed service.

(3) In the case of a member described in subsection (b) who establishes to the satisfaction of the Secretary concerned that the allotment of the member's household under the food stamp program, calculated in the absence of the supplemental subsistence allowance, would exceed the amount established by the Secretary concerned under paragraph (2), the amount of the supplemental subsistence allowance for the member shall be equal to the lesser of the following:

(A) The value of that allotment.

(B) \$500.

(b) MEMBERS ENTITLED TO ALLOWANCE- (1) Subject to subsection (d), a member of the armed forces is entitled to receive the supplemental subsistence allowance if the Secretary concerned determines that the member's income, together with the income of the rest of the member's household (if any), is within the highest income standard of eligibility, as then in effect under section 5(c) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2014(c)) and without regard to paragraph (1) of such section, for participation in the food stamp program.

(2) In determining whether a member meets the eligibility criteria under paragraph (1),

the Secretary--

`(A) shall not take into consideration the amount of the supplemental subsistence allowance payable under this section; but

`(B) shall take into consideration the amount of the basic allowance for housing that the member receives under section 403 of this title or would otherwise receive under such section, in the case of a member who is not entitled to that allowance as a result of assignment to quarters of the United States or a housing facility under the jurisdiction of a uniformed service.

`(c) APPLICATION FOR ALLOWANCE- To request the supplemental subsistence allowance, a member shall submit an application to the Secretary concerned in such form and containing such information as the Secretary concerned may prescribe. A member applying for the supplemental subsistence allowance shall furnish such evidence regarding the member's satisfaction of the eligibility criteria under subsection (b) as the Secretary concerned may require.

`(d) EFFECTIVE PERIOD- The entitlement of a member to receive the supplemental subsistence allowance terminates upon the occurrence of any of the following events, even though the member continues to meet the eligibility criteria described in subsection (b):

`(1) Payment of the supplemental subsistence allowance for 12 consecutive months.

`(2) Promotion of the member to a higher grade.

`(3) Transfer of the member in a permanent change of station.

`(e) REAPPLICATION- Upon the termination of the effective period of the supplemental subsistence allowance for a member, or in anticipation of the imminent termination of the allowance, a member may reapply for the allowance under subsection (c), and the Secretary concerned shall approve the application and resume payment of the allowance to the member, if the member continues to meet, or once again meets, the eligibility criteria described in subsection (b).

`(f) REPORTING REQUIREMENT- Not later than March 1 of each year after 2001, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report specifying the number of members of the armed forces who received, at any time during the preceding year, the supplemental subsistence allowance. In preparing the report, the Secretary of Defense shall consult with the Secretary of Transportation. No report is required under this subsection after March 1, 2006.

`(g) DEFINITIONS- In this section:

`(1) The term `Secretary concerned' means--

`(A) the Secretary of Defense; and

`(B) the Secretary of Transportation, with respect to the Coast Guard when it is not operating as a service in the Navy.

`(2) The terms `allotment' and `household' have the meanings given those terms in section 3 of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2012).

`(3) The term `food stamp program' means the program established pursuant to section 4 of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2013).

`(h) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY- No supplemental subsistence allowance may be provided under this section after September 30, 2006.'

(2) The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 402 the following:

`402a. Supplemental subsistence allowance for low-income members with dependents.'

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE- Section 402a of title 37, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on the first day of the first month that begins not less than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.