

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To amend title 37, United States Code, to require the payment of the maximum amount of aviation incentive pay to aviation officers with more than 8 years of aviation service and to enhance the retention incentives available to aviation officers.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BUDD (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KING, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. KAINE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To amend title 37, United States Code, to require the payment of the maximum amount of aviation incentive pay to aviation officers with more than 8 years of aviation service and to enhance the retention incentives available to aviation officers.

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 “Retention Enhance-
5 ments for Tactical Aircrew INitiative Act of 2026” or the
6 “RETAIN Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. PAYMENT OF MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF AVIATION IN-**
2 **CENTIVE PAY TO OFFICERS WITH MORE**
3 **THAN 8 YEARS OF AVIATION SERVICE.**

4 Section 334(c) of title 37, United States Code, is
5 amended—

6 (1) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “subject
7 to paragraph (5),” before “aviation incentive”; and

8 (2) by adding at the end the following new
9 paragraph:

10 “(5) MAXIMUM AMOUNT FOR OFFICERS WITH
11 MORE THAN 8 YEARS OF AVIATION SERVICE.—An of-
12 ficer who is entitled to aviation incentive pay under
13 subsection (a) and has completed more than 8 years
14 of aviation service shall receive the maximum month-
15 ly amount of such pay under paragraph (1)(A).”.

16 **SEC. 3. ENHANCEMENT OF AIR FORCE RATED OFFICER RE-**
17 **TENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.**

18 (a) ELIGIBLE OFFICERS.—Subsection (b)(2) of sec-
19 tion 604 of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Au-
20 thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117–
21 263; 37 U.S.C. 301b note) is amended—

22 (1) by striking “and not less than one year”;
23 and

24 (2) by striking “under section 653 of title 10,
25 United States Code”.

1 (b) WRITTEN AGREEMENTS.—Subsection (c)(1) of
2 such section is amended—

3 (1) by striking “four years” and inserting “one
4 year”; and

5 (2) by striking “under section 653 of title 10,
6 United States Code”.

7 (c) RETENTION INCENTIVES.—Subsection (d) of such
8 section is amended—

9 (1) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the
10 following new paragraph (1):

11 “(1) FLEXIBILITY OF ASSIGNMENT AND DUTY
12 LOCATIONS.—Under the demonstration program re-
13 quired under subsection (a), the Secretary shall offer
14 to a rated officer described in subsection (b), to the
15 maximum extent practicable (as determined by the
16 Secretary)—

17 “(A) assignment to the duty location of the
18 rated officer’s preference, including consecutive
19 assignments to the same duty location;

20 “(B) the opportunity to perform a staff as-
21 signment that does not require flying remotely,
22 such that the officer may avoid relocation or re-
23 main in active flying status; and

1 “(C) the opportunity to transition indefi-
2 nitely to a non-combat aviation service posi-
3 tion.”;

4 (2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the
5 following new paragraph (2):

6 “(2) AVIATION BONUS.—

7 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Under the demonstra-
8 tion program required under subsection (a),
9 notwithstanding section 334(c) of title 37,
10 United States Code, the Secretary may pay to
11 a rated officer described in subsection (b) an
12 aviation bonus not to exceed an average annual
13 amount of \$100,000.

14 “(B) PAYMENT OF MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—
15 The Secretary—

16 “(i) shall ensure the maximum
17 amount payable under subparagraph (A) is
18 offered to any rated officer described in
19 subsection (b) who executes a written
20 agreement under subsection (c) to remain
21 on active duty for one or more years after
22 the completion of the active duty service
23 obligation of the officer; and

24 “(ii) may not vary the amount of an
25 aviation bonus offered to an officer based

1 on the active duty service commitment the
2 officer has remaining at the time of
3 offer.”; and

4 (3) by adding at the end the following new
5 paragraph:

6 “(4) ALIGNING TOTAL FORCE INCENTIVES.—

7 The Secretary shall ensure that an offer under this
8 subsection to a rated officer described in subsection
9 (b) includes—

10 “(A) contract length options equal to or
11 shorter than contract length options offered by
12 the Air National Guard and the Air Force Re-
13 serve; and

14 “(B) an aviation bonus under paragraph
15 (2) in an amount that is equal to or exceeds the
16 amounts offered by the Air National Guard and
17 the Air Force Reserve.”.

18 (d) EXTENSION OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.—

19 Subsection (g) of such section is amended by striking
20 “2028” and inserting “2031”.