



Senate Update – April 28, 2008

Last Week in the Senate

The Senate began consideration of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007 (S. 1315) on April 22, 2008. S. 1315 was introduced by Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) and was reported out of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs on August 29, 2007. This legislation affects a wide range of veterans' benefits, including life insurance, housing grants, and burial allowances. In addition, the bill creates a \$221 million pension fund for Filipino veterans of World War II living in the Philippines.

Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) offered an amendment that would have removed the pension fund for Filipino veterans and used the \$221 million to increase grant programs that help disabled veterans modify their homes and cars and to enhance burial benefits. The amendment was rejected by a vote of 41 to 56 on April 24, 2008. ([Record Vote 111](#)) Following the failure of Senator Burr's amendment, the full Senate passed S. 1315 by a vote of 96 to 1. ([Record Vote 112](#))

In the midst of considering S. 1315, the Senate brought up the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007 (H.R. 2831). H.R. 2831 is a direct legislative response to the Supreme Court decision on May 29, 2007, Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., Inc. In this case, the Court upheld the reporting statutory time limit of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 regarding discriminatory acts. If H.R. 2831 were to become law, it would eliminate the filing deadlines for discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Senate failed to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2831 by a vote of 56 to 42. ([Record Vote 110](#))

**Note: The House passed H.R. 2831 on July 31, 2007, by a vote of 225 to 199. ([Legislative Digest for H.R. 2831](#))*

On April 24, 2008, the Senate passed the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA, H.R. 493). Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) had placed a hold on the bill because of concerns regarding a provision that he and the business community believed could open employers to several lawsuits under both insurance and employment laws. Upon reaching a compromise with Senate sponsors of the bill, Senator Coburn removed his hold and the bill passed 95 to 0. ([Record Vote 113](#)) H.R. 493, as amended, now awaits consideration by the House of Representatives.

**Note: The House passed H.R. 493 by a vote of 420 to 3 on April 24, 2007.*

This Week in the Senate

The Senate is expected to consider the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2881) during the week of April 28, 2008. The last full FAA authorization expired in September and Congress has passed a series of short term extensions while the Senate worked on a compromise for funding the air traffic control system's modernization. The House passed H.R. 2881 by a vote of 267 to 151 on September 20, 2007. ([Roll Call 890](#)) ([Legislative Digest for H.R. 2881](#))