



## DOD AGREES TO CHANGES TO SCRA WEBSITE

early as October 31, 2019. □

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On October 3rd, the U.S. Department of Defense (“DoD”) has agreed to make changes to the federal Servicemember Civil Relief Act (“SCRA”) website, which the DoD operates to allow certain persons to verify a servicemember’s eligibility to receive benefits under the SCRA.

The DoD’s agreement settles a lawsuit initiated by veterans groups that want to prevent disclosure of servicemembers’ personal information through the SCRA website to persons that use the information for purposes other than to verify a servicemember’s eligibility for SCRA benefits. *See Vietnam Veterans of America v. Dept. of Defense*, No. 17-cv-730 (N.Y.W.D. Oct. 3, 2019).

Changes to the SCRA website will include:

- Implement a terms of use that users must affirmatively accept to submit searches through the SCRA website. The terms of use will define authorized use of the website, warn that violations may result in account termination and mention potential criminal penalties for website misuse.
- Require users to register for an account on the SCRA website to run searches. The DoD will collect the name, mailing address and company name (if applicable) of every user.
- Not require users to submit (and thus, not require a user to collect) a servicemember’s social security number to complete a search, although users may still submit a social security number to increase the accuracy of searches.
- Develop analytics to monitor the use of the SCRA website to identify potential misuse of the SCRA database. Among other things, the analytics must flag accounts searching for name/social security matches by running the same name against multiple social security numbers or vice versa.
- Adopt a procedure to investigate potential misuse of the website and deactivate accounts because of misuse.
- Submit quarterly report to the veterans groups with certain information, such as a list of company names of active users, to the extent permitted under applicable law.

The aforementioned changes will be implemented within three months of the settlement. DoD must implement some changes as

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