

Retirement and Military Personnel

The VFW's Concerns:

Reform to retirement pay and disability compensation policy is long overdue. Congress has not passed substantive concurrent receipt legislation for military retirees since 2004, leaving countless service-connected disabled retirees in challenging predicaments. The VFW has long argued that Department of Defense (DOD) retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) service-connected disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits, earned for different reasons. Yet, those who were medically retired under Chapter 61 *before* serving twenty years, regardless of disability rating, are required to offset their retiree pay with the amount of VA disability compensation they receive.

Chapter 61 retirees include combat-injured and ill veterans with varying abilities who need to find and maintain gainful employment, as well as those who require round-the-clock caregiver support resulting in financial strain on themselves and their families. Currently, more than 50,300 Chapter 61 retirees with combat-related disabilities do not have full access to their vested retirement pay and service-connected disability compensation. These veterans are unjustly being denied the benefits they earned and deserve.

Members of Congress are beginning to understand the injustice caused by the retirement pay and disability compensation offset as evidenced by growing bipartisan and bicameral support for H.R. 1282 / S. 344, *Major Richard Star Act*. Presently, this legislation has garnered the support of 300 members of the House and 62 members of the Senate.

The VFW urges Congress to:

- Pass H.R. 1282 / S. 344, *Major Richard Star Act*, either as a standalone bill or via the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, which would enable Chapter 61 veterans who sustained combat-related injuries to be entitled to DOD retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset.