

Major Richard Star Act

BACKGROUND

The Major Richard Star Act is bipartisan legislation intended to correct a long-standing inequity affecting medically retired, combat-injured veterans. The bill would authorize full concurrent receipt of Department of Defense (DoD) medical retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation for eligible veterans who were medically retired prior to completing 20 years of service due to combat-related disabilities.

Under current law, certain combat-injured veterans who are medically retired with fewer than 20 years of service are required to waive or offset their earned DoD medical retirement pay in order to receive VA disability compensation. This policy creates an inequitable, two-tiered system that arbitrarily distinguishes veterans based solely on length of service rather than the severity or cause of their injuries. As a result, veterans whose military careers were involuntarily cut short by combat-related wounds are financially penalized for circumstances beyond their control. The Major Richard Star Act would restore fairness by ensuring these veterans receive the full benefits they have earned through honorable service and sacrifice.

KEY POINTS

- Combat-injured veterans who are medically retired before completing 20 years of service are currently denied full concurrent receipt of benefits they have earned.
- Military retired pay is earned compensation for honorable service, while VA disability compensation is restitution for service-connected injuries; these benefits serve separate and distinct purposes.
- Under current law, veterans are treated unequally based solely on length of service, not on the severity, cause or combat-related nature of their injuries.
- It eliminates the requirement that medically retired combat-injured veterans waive earned retirement pay in order to receive VA disability compensation.
- Combat-injured veterans are medically retired through no fault of their own, often as a direct result of wounds sustained in service to the nation.
- The current \$1-for-\$1 offset policy undermines financial stability for wounded veterans and their families.
- This disparity undermines fairness, morale and the nation's obligation to those who were wounded in defense of the United States.

WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO

- **Pass H.R.2102 – Major Richard Star Act** to authorize full concurrent receipt for medically retired combat-injured veterans.
- Eliminate statutory offsets that unfairly penalize veterans wounded in combat.
- Ensure parity and fairness across all military retirement categories.



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