



February 18, 2021

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chair, Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chair, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Reed and Smith and Ranking Members Inhofe and Rogers:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans' associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members, their families, and survivors, write to express our support of the *Major Richard Star Act*.

Under current law, Servicemembers who are medically retired due to combat-related injuries before reaching 20 years of service are prevented from collecting both their service earned retirement pay and VA disability compensation. These two benefits, established by Congress for entirely different reasons, are nonetheless subject to a statutory offset. In recognition of this injustice, medically retired personnel may apply for Combat Related Special Compensation that partially makes up for this injustice. The *Major Richard Star Act* will authorize concurrent receipt of DoD retired pay, for years of service, and VA disability compensation for injuries incurred in service. This legislation is another small step in correcting a larger concurrent receipt problem.

In 2004, Congress acknowledged the injustice of the offset by granting concurrent receipt for retirees with at least 20 years of service who are rated 50 percent disabled or greater. However, those who are 40 percent disabled and below, and those who were unable to complete 20 years of service due to service-connected injuries or illnesses are still subject to the offset. An incremental approach to correcting this injustice should start with those injured in combat in recognition of their extraordinary sacrifices in defending our Nation. Military retired pay is an earned benefit for vested years of service. Service-connected disability compensation is for injury. To deny retired pay because of a disability is an injustice.

As such, we request you ensure the *Major Richard Star Act* is incorporated into the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act to provide our veterans with the compensation they have rightfully earned.

Sincerely,

Jack Du Teil
President,
The Military Coalition



The Military Coalition:

Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA)
Air Force Association (AFA)
Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)
American Veterans (AMVETS)
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)
Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
Association of the United States Navy (AUSN)
Blinded Veterans Association (BVA)
Chief Warrant Officers Association of the US Coast Guard (CWOA)
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)
Gold Star Wives of America (GSW)
Iraq Afghanistan Veterans Association (IAVA)
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV)
Marine Corps League (MCL)
Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA)
Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America (MCA)
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)
National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS)
National Military Family Association (NMFA)
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA)
Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)
Reserve Organization of America (ROA)
Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
The Independence Fund (TIF)
United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)
USCG Chief Petty Officers Association (CPOA)
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
VetsFirst, United Spinal Program
Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)
Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)