



March 19, 2020

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

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

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

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

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

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans' associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members and their families and survivors, write to express our support of the *Major Richard Star Act* H.R. 5995, and the Senate companion bill S.3393.

Military retirees with 20 or more years of service qualify for retirement pay based on their dedicated service to our nation. These retirees may also qualify for disability compensation for any injuries that were caused or aggravated by their military service.

In 2004, TMC successfully advocated Congress to implement concurrent receipt for retirees who are rated 50 percent disabled or greater. However, remaining to be approved are those who are 40% disabled and below, and those who were unable to complete 20 years of service due to service-connected injuries or illness. There are approximately 210,000 of these individuals, known as Chapter 61 retirees. Some retirees who suffered from injuries incurred in combat are eligible for Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) which mitigates some loss in pay due to the offset. There are approximately 42,000 of these individuals.

Military and Veterans Service Organizations have long argued that retired pay and VA service-connected disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits, granted for different reasons. 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.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that eliminating full concurrent receipt would cost more than \$30 billion over ten years. An incremental approach chips away at the total cost by first eliminating subsets of the population who are still awaiting concurrent receipt of both pays.



The veterans in most need are those with combat injuries and less than 20 years of service. The *Major Richard Star Act* would provide total offset relief. This also reduces the number of people still awaiting total concurrent receipt, and commensurately reduces the cost of total concurrent receipt for all retirees who should keep both their retired pay and disability compensation.

TMC, as represented by those organizations listed on the attached, appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to America's military and veterans. Please support this legislation and ensure it is incorporated into the NDAA. We look forward to working with you to move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

Jack Du Teil
President,
The Military Coalition



Air Force Association (AFA)
Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)
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 Officers Association (ROA)
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)
USCG Chief Petty Officers Association (CPOA)
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
VetsFirst, United Spinal Program
Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)