



## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES & POLICY INITIATIVES 118TH ★ CONGRESS



### **Support Combat-Injured Veterans by Passing the *Major Richard Star Act H.R.1282/S.344***

Combat-injured veterans forced into early retirement by their injury are not receiving their vested longevity pay. Reducing retirement pay because of a disability is an injustice. *The Major Richard Star Act* (H.R. 1282/S. 344) will correct this injustice.

#### ***Understanding the STAR Act***

The *STAR Act* would support more than 50,300 combat-injured veterans by allowing concurrent receipt of vested longevity pay and VA disability. These individuals, often seriously disabled, are subject to an offset where their retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of VA disability received. In some cases, their retirement pay is eliminated. These two different payments, from two different sources, are for two different purposes.

DoD is responsible for retired pay covering vested years of service (in the past), while VA is responsible for disability compensation covering a lifelong injury (in the future). Congress acknowledged this as an injustice and partially fixed it through the *FY 2004 National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA). The part that wasn't corrected includes those who were injured in combat and forced to retire before completing 20 years of service, resulting in an offset where their retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of disability provided by the VA.

Reducing retirement pay due to a combat injury is clearly an injustice for combat-injured veterans, many of whom require full-time care. Spouses/family frequently give up their jobs to help their loved one. This increases financial concerns and stress. Passing the *Star Act* will bring much-needed support to the 50,300 combat-injured veterans who often have compounding challenges from their injury.

VVA fully supports passage of H.R. 1282/S. 344, *The Major Richard Star Act*, to ensure combat-injured veterans receive all their earned vested retirement pay for dedicated years of service, and all their disability compensation, earned through extraordinary personal sacrifice. To reduce retirement pay because of a combat injury is a travesty of justice.

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*Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the only national Vietnam Veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families.*

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