

Subject: Support Legislation to Protect Individual Unemployability for Disabled Veterans

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To: joe@yktc.us;

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A JOINT MESSAGE FROM

DAV and the DAV Auxiliary

On November 9, 2017, Representative Maxine Waters (CA), introduced H.R. 4369, the Protecting Benefits for Disabled Veterans Act of 2017. The bill would codify regulations on Individual Unemployability (IU) into federal law. Furthermore, H.R. 4369 would provide additional protections for IU and prohibit the VA from considering the age of the veteran or their eligibility to any retirement benefit, including Social Security, in making such determinations. The DAV supports this legislation in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 034.

In May 2017, the Administration's budget proposal contained a proposal that would have eliminated eligibility for VA's IU program for thousands of disabled veterans. If enacted, it would have terminated existing IU ratings for veterans when they reach the age of 62--the minimum retirement age for Social Security benefits--as well as cut off IU benefits for any veteran already in receipt of Social Security retirement benefits. In the face of staunch opposition from DAV and other VSOs, the Administration subsequently backed away from this measure; however, the threat remains that this proposal or something like it could resurface in the future.

As we testified to Congress earlier this year, DAV is vehemently opposed to limiting disability compensation benefits, including IU, due to a veteran's age. Many disabled veterans may not have income replacement available--especially those who have been on IU for an extended period in advance of reaching retirement age. Cutting off IU eligibility for veterans who turn 62 would compel many disabled veterans to take Social Security benefits early which significantly reduces the value of the benefit. The disabled veterans affected could thus be "doubly" penalized because they cannot work and save for retirement as do many peers of their age. Eliminating their eligibility for IU would be grossly unfair.

H.R. 4369 would place regulations for eligibility for IU directly into law and protect IU benefits from any ill-conceived cost-saving measures in the future. We are calling on all DAV members and supporters to contact their Representatives and urge them to co-sponsor and support H.R. 4369 to protect veterans and their families now and in the future, from these harmful proposals.

Thank you for standing with us and participating in the DAV Commander's Action Network.

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