



MEDIA ADVISORY

Contact: Charity Edgar, 202-314-5221, cedgar@dav.org

November 28, 2017

Senate bill would expand life-changing caregiver benefits to veterans of all eras

If enacted, recently introduced Senate legislation would strengthen and reform the Department of Veteran's Affairs health care system and create a new integrated community care program. Sponsored by Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson and Ranking Member Jon Tester, the bipartisan "*Caring for our Veterans Act of 2017*" also includes a critical provision that would extend comprehensive VA caregiver benefits to veterans severely injured during and prior to the Vietnam War. Following a two year period, the program would expand to include veterans of all eras.

Fairness for all veteran caregivers is a priority for DAV members, and passage of this legislation would finally address the inequity facing too many unsung heroes who care for the men and women who served and sacrificed. The Senate VA Committee will vote on the measure this week.

Earlier this year, DAV released a [report on caregivers, "America's Unsung Heroes"](#) because much of the American public is not aware of the dedication and sacrifices caregivers make supporting our nation's heroes. Most caregivers go unrecognized and their needs unmet. Based on current law, VA is prohibited from providing comprehensive support for caregivers of veterans severely disabled before September 11, 2001. Many of them are now aging and their caregivers' ability to continue in their role is compromised—access to comprehensive assistance would help sustain their efforts. Additionally, supporting family caregivers can be less costly to the federal government than treating veterans through institution-based options.

"Perhaps most importantly, it allows so many injured and ill veterans remain in their homes with family," said [DAV Past National Commander Dave Riley](#), a former Coast Guard rescue swimmer and quadruple amputee, whose wife Yvonne is ineligible for caregiver benefits due to his dates of service. "I am able to get out of bed every morning and rest comfortably at night because of her. Yvonne is my caregiver—one of America's unsung heroes who takes care of the millions of disabled veterans living in America. She is why I am urging Congress to extend the VA's comprehensive caregiver assistance benefits to all disabled veterans of all eras."

DAV continues to work tirelessly advocating on Capitol Hill, but we need your help.

[Sign and share our petition](#) to urge Congress to extend the VA comprehensive caregiver assistance benefits to disabled veterans of all eras. You can also [click here](#) to hear from impacted veterans and their caregivers first-hand, including the Rileys, and learn more about DAV's efforts to change laws and policies to ensure equal access to comprehensive benefits, supports and services for caregivers of all wartime veterans.

About DAV:

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; providing employment resources to veterans and their families and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a non-profit organization with nearly 1.3 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at www.dav.org.