

VFW Demands Action on Major Richard Star Act

The legislation aims to permit combat-related medically retired veterans with less than 20 years of military service to receive full earned retirement pay and disability compensation without an offset

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VFW on March 5 held a press conference on Capitol Hill to address a critical disparity that has long plagued many retired veterans.

If passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden, the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S. 344) would provide medically retired combat veterans who served less than 20 years in the military with full retirement and disability compensation.

Currently, only retired military members with at least a 50 percent VA disability rating and 20 years of service are eligible to collect full retirement and full VA disability pay. Others who do not fall into those parameters have their retirement pay offset by the amount of disability compensation they receive.

Presently, the Department of Defense gives combat-related disability pay to more than 50,000 retired veterans with less than 20 years of military service.

VFW Department of Montana Adjutant and Quartermaster Tim Peters spoke at the press conference and emphasized that there is already bipartisan and bicameral consensus around the Major Richard Star Act.

“Our veterans cannot afford to continue losing their full-earned military retirement pay because Congress insists on saving money at their expense,” Peters said. “It is time to stop talking about this bill and get it done.”

The press conference had a significant turnout of VFW members from around the world. VFW advocates were in Washington, D.C., at the time for the annual VFW Washington

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Conference. Also in attendance were Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.), Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Tonya Star, the widow of Army Maj. Richard Star.

At the press conference, Tonya Star encouraged VFW, other veterans service organizations and lawmakers to continue fighting for the passage of the Major Richard Star Act.

“It was, by far, Richard’s greatest goal to pass this [legislation],” Tonya Star said. “These men and women earned their retirements – the hard way. And, Richard made myself, along with many of you, promise to not stop until this is done.”

The bill is named in honor of Richard Star, who had to retire early due to terminal lung cancer caused during his service in Afghanistan and Iraq. He died on Feb. 13, 2021.

This Washington Wire article is featured in the 2024 May issue of [VFW magazine](#).