

VFW to Washington Post - Veterans' Disability Benefits are Not 'Loopholes' to Exploit

The following letter from the VFW National Commander was submitted to the Washington Post today

Oct 07, 2025

To the Editors of The Washington Post,

Your recent article, "How some veterans exploit \$193 billion VA program, due to lax controls" (October 2025), is not just a disservice to veterans — it is a dangerously misleading piece that feeds into damaging stereotypes and ignores both the moral and legal foundations of the Department of Veterans Affairs disability system.

Let's be absolutely clear: veterans' disability benefits are not charity. They are compensation owed for injuries and conditions incurred in the line of duty — promised by a government that asked men and women to risk their lives and health, often irreversibly, on its behalf. These benefits are not some "loopholes" for opportunists to exploit; they are the very least this country can do for the people it sent to war repeatedly, especially after more than two decades of sustained conflict without a draft.

Your article leans heavily on inflammatory anecdotes and edge cases, portraying veterans as system abusers, while ignoring the structural reality: combat wounds are not the only occupational hazards of military service. The daily grind of service — exposure to toxic environments, repeated concussions, sleep deprivation, moral injury, sexual trauma, constant stress, and grueling physical demands — leaves lasting scars. Just because a veteran wasn't blown up by an IED doesn't mean they aren't disabled.

Invisible injuries like PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and toxic exposure-related illnesses are not "new" or suspect; we just finally stopped ignoring them. Every generation of veterans before this one suffered in silence, and many died without care or acknowledgment. To now

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say that recognizing these conditions is proof of fraud is not only illogical — it is cruel.

The article also seems to misunderstand how VA disability ratings work. The system doesn't compensate based solely on whether someone can work. It compensates based on how a service-connected condition impairs a veteran's average ability to function in life and society. The fact that a veteran can hold a job doesn't mean their disability doesn't make daily life harder, more painful, or more isolating. If VA ratings were based solely on complete incapacity, we wouldn't see skyrocketing rates of veteran suicide, addiction, homelessness, or divorce — all of which are fueled not by fraud, but by the very real and too often dismissed cost of military service.

Lastly, let's not ignore what this article really reflects: veterans make an easy scapegoat for the elites of this country. We're a small percentage of the population. Many Americans are disconnected from the wars they authorized or ignored. It is politically and socially convenient to question the integrity of veterans rather than confront the true cost of 25 years of war. But the cost is real. And the obligation to those who bore it is not optional.

If your investigative team wants to find waste and fraud, start with the contractors who overbill, the generals who fail upward, the executives of squandered programs, or the politicians who wave flags while gutting oversight. But don't you dare turn on America's sons and daughters who carried the burden of service and now ask only for the care and compensation they were promised.

We veterans kept our end of the agreement and will continue to demand that those who asked us to defend our nation do the same. **[Honor The Contract.](#)**

Sincerely,
Carol Whitmore
VFW Commander-in-Chief

Read Washington Post article [*How some veterans exploit \\$193 billion VA program, due to lax controls.*](#)