

January 17, 2014

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Chairman, Committee on Veterans Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of more than 380,000 members, I am writing to thank you for your leadership on the Veterans Health and Benefits Improvement Act, S.1950, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014. Your legislation -- based primarily on the bi-partisan Senate Veterans Benefits Omnibus, S. 944 -- offers comprehensive and much needed solutions for our returning warriors, veterans, survivors and family members.

MOAA is deeply appreciative of the inclusion of a provision in S. 1950 that repeals the unfair 1% COLA Cut of the earned pensions of working age military retirees established in the Balanced Budget Act. Your legislation also addresses a number of MOAA priorities for veterans including:

- Extension of advance appropriations for all Dept. of Veterans Affairs accounts
- Authorization for in-state tuition rates at public colleges for all student veterans using the new GI Bill
- Honoring as veterans certain career Reserve members eligible for reserve retired pay
- Authorization for Iraq and Afghanistan surviving spouses to the Post-9/11 GI Bill via the "Gunnery Sgt. John D. Fry Scholarship Program"
- Retention of DIC by eligible widows who remarry at age 55
- Improved care and services for veterans who were sexually assaulted in military service
- Extension of VA health care enrollment opportunity for OIF-OEF veterans from 5 to 10 years
- Renewal of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act veterans retraining assistance program
- Requirement for more timely claims backlog reporting

These and other measures provide a strong foundation for our nation's veterans after more than a dozen years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On behalf of our membership, I want to thank you again sincerely for S. 1950 and urge that it be adopted on a broad bi-partisan basis as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

