



January 22, 2014

Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
412 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 2051

Dear Chairman Sanders:

On behalf of Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), I offer you our strongest support for S. 1950, the “Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014.” This legislation marks one of the most comprehensive bills to ever be considered in the Senate or House and it reflects many high priorities recently shared with you by our National Legislative program.

This comprehensive bill would create, expand, advance, and extend a wide array of VA health care and benefits services and programs that are important to PVA and its members. Specifically, this legislation accomplishes one of the highest priorities for many of our members—expansion of the Comprehensive Caregiver Assistance Program to veterans of all eras (not just those injured after September 11, 2001). No reasonable justification (other than cost considerations) can be provided as to why pre-9/11 veterans with a service-connected injury or illness should be excluded from the comprehensive caregiver program. This legislation provides a welcome change.

The legislation also addresses another high priority for PVA. Specifically, the bill provides advance appropriations authority for VA’s mandatory funding accounts (compensation and pension, education benefits, dependency and indemnity compensation, etc.) to ensure that in the event of a future government shutdown, veterans’ benefits payments would not be delayed or put in jeopardy. The need for this change was revealed during the partial government shutdown that occurred in October 2013.

Another high priority for PVA that this legislation addresses is repeal of the reduction in future cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for all military retirees, not just service members who are retired due to disability. The Senate and House shamefully approved a one percent reduction in the COLA for military retirees as a part of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement in December 2013. Too many times Congress has attempted to

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balance the budget on the backs of military service members, veterans, and their families, and this effort is no different. This legislation will correct that mistake.

Once again Chairman Sanders, we applaud you for taking such a bold step to address the wide ranging issues facing veterans and their families. We are committed to building support for S. 1950 and we have called on our membership to express this support to their senators as well. We look forward to seeing this effort through to final passage. If we can be of further assistance, please contact PVA's National Legislative Director Carl Blake at (202) 416-7708.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Lawson".

Bill Lawson  
National President  
Paralyzed Veterans of America