

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SJM 8008

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government

Brief Description: Requesting that veterans receive concurrent retirement and disability payments.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Swecker, Roach, Shin, Kastama, Franklin, Winsley, Schmidt, Oke, Eide and Kohl-Welles; by request of Joint Select Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 3/21/03, 3/28/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests that disabled retired veterans receive retirement pay as well as disability compensation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Shabro, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Nixon, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

"Concurrent receipt" refers to the dual receipt of military retirement pay and disability compensation from the Department of Veteran Affairs. A disabled military retiree must offset, dollar for dollar, from their retirement pay the amount they are receiving in disability compensation.

In January 2002 Congress passed legislation that would allow disabled military retirees to collect both their earned pensions and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs. However, funding was not provided to implement the program.

There are currently two bills in Congress addressing concurrent receipt. The House bill authorizes concurrent receipt for those military retirees identified as 60 to 100 percent disabled. Payments would be phased in over a five-year period until the retirement pension is paid in full each month. The Senate bill would authorize concurrent receipt for all retired disabled veterans, regardless of any percentage of disability, with no phase in.

Summary of Bill:

A request is made to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of the United States Department of Defense, and to Congress to fund the enacted law to furnish all disabled retired veterans their concurrent receipt.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Testimony For: Veterans deserve concurrent receipt of their disability and retirement pay. This is a tremendous injustice. Congress did not fund it last year, and may now implement it on a phased-in basis.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Rasmussen, prime sponsor.