



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

Pushing
Access
Forward

VA's Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The Issue

On June 6, 2018, President Trump signed into law the VA MISSION Act, authorizing the expansion of eligibility to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (Caregiver Program) to those injured before September 11, 2001. Since the program began in 2010, it has been restricted to veterans injured on or after 9/11.

Under the VA MISSION Act, VA cannot expand the caregiver program until the Secretary certifies to Congress that VA's IT system will be able to fully support the expanded program. VA failed to meet its deadline to provide that certification.

We call on Congress to mandate that VA implement the caregiver expansion for eligible veterans who sustained a serious military-related injury on or before May 7, 1975, no later than June 2020. And to keep as close as possible with the original intent of the VA MISSION Act, all other eligible veterans should be allowed to apply for the program no later than October 1, 2021.

In addition, we support the **TEAM Veteran Caregivers Act (S. 2216)**, which seeks to ensure that future intake, downgrade, or discharge actions pertaining to the comprehensive caregiver program are executed in a timely and impartial manner, and the **S.O.S. Veterans Caregivers Act (H.R. 4451)** to expand caregiver benefits to veterans who have catastrophic illnesses as a result of their military service. Lastly, we also support the **Care for the Veteran Caregiver (H.R. 5701)**, which would make needed improvements to VA's comprehensive family caregiver program to eliminate unnecessary evaluations, extend stipend payments to caregivers for a transition period following the veteran's death, and standardize the eligibility process.

PVA Position

- Congress should provide aggressive oversight of the caregiver expansion project until it is fully implemented.
- Congress must pass the **TEAM Veteran Caregivers Act (S. 2216)**, which would make changes to the VA's Caregiver Program to ensure proper procedures are followed prior to downgrading or terminating a veteran's participation in it.
- Congress must pass the **S.O.S. Veterans Caregivers Act (H.R. 4451)** to make veterans with service-connected illnesses eligible to access VA's Caregiver Program.
- Congress must pass the **Care for the Veteran Caregiver Act (H.R. 5701)**, which would eliminate unnecessary evaluations, provide a transition of payments following a veteran's death, and standardize eligibility for the VA's Caregiver Program.
- VA must request and Congress must provide sufficient funding for VA's Caregiver Program within the VA's medical services' appropriations.