



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

Pushing
Access
Forward

Improving Access to Adapted Automobiles

The Issue

Veterans and service members with certain service-connected disabilities are eligible for a one-time only payment of not more than \$21,488.29 to be used towards the purchase of a specially equipped vehicle. Eligibility requirements include:

- Loss, or permanent loss of use of 1 or both feet;
- Loss, or permanent loss of use of 1 or both hands;
- Permanent impairment of vision in both eyes to a certain degree;
- A severe burn injury;
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS); or
- Ankylosis in 1 or both knees, or hips (**NOTE:** This qualifies for an adaptive-equipment grant only)

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) also helps service-connected veterans with certain disabilities in adapting no more than two vehicles every four years through the Automobile Adaptive Equipment (AAE) grant. Adapted equipment available to these veterans includes power steering, power windows, power seats, and other equipment needed to operate a vehicle or for ingress or egress. Veterans are required to submit receipts for this equipment to be reimbursed.

Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities are not eligible for AAE. However, they may be reimbursed for ingress or egress modifications paid for out of medical services funding to a vehicle they have purchased for the purpose of providing the veteran transportation to medical care.

PVA Position

- PVA supports the **AUTO for Veterans Act (H.R. 5761)**, which would allow veterans to use the automobile grant once every ten years for the purchase, not lease, of an adapted vehicle. Veterans, therefore, would not have to shoulder the burden of the full cost of a vehicle.
- PVA opposes VA requiring veterans and service members to provide an itemized list of “options” included in the price of the vehicle in order to receive the AAE grant. With vehicles being so advanced, many features that were previously categorized as being added equipment, for example, power steering and air conditioning, are now categorized as standard equipment. We also support requiring VA to reimburse modern driver assistance technologies to broaden opportunities for veterans with catastrophic disabilities to drive more comfortably and safely.
- PVA supports legislation to allow veterans who have non-service-connected catastrophic disabilities to receive the same type of adaptive automobile equipment as veterans whose disabilities are service-connected.