



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

Pushing
Access
Forward

Benefits for Surviving Spouses of ALS Veterans

The Issue

Eligible survivors can receive an additional \$284.57 per month in Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) if the veteran was rated totally disabled for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. This extra payment is commonly referred to as the “DIC kicker.”

The Department of Veterans Affairs regulations recognize amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) as a presumptive service-connected disease and, due to its aggressive nature, it is automatically rated at 100 percent once service connected. However, because the average life expectancy for a person with ALS is two to five years, many spouses of deceased veterans with ALS rarely qualify for the additional DIC benefit given the eight-year requirement.

This policy fails to recognize the significant sacrifices these veterans and their families have made for this country.

PVA Position

- PVA believes survivors should not be deprived of a benefit simply because the service-connected disease their veterans acquired made it nearly impossible for them to meet an eight-year life expectancy requirement.
- Congress should pass the **Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2019 (H.R. 4748/S. 3091)** to entitle surviving spouses of veterans who died of service-connected ALS to the DIC kicker.