

Loeb sack, Thompson Introduce Recovering Service Members Disability Benefits Act

Written by Vonnie Hampel
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Legislation Expedites Access for Wounded Warrior Disability Benefits, Reduces Financial Strain on Recovering Service Members

Washington, D.C. – Congressmen Dave Loebsack and Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson (R-PA) have introduced [H.R. 6445](#), the *Recovering Service Members Disability Benefits Act*, legislation to exempt disabled service members from the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) 5-month benefit waiting period. H.R. 6445 was introduced with the support numerous military and veteran support groups, including the National Guard Association (NGAUS) and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

“Our servicemembers who have been wounded defending our country should not have to wait for benefits or face financial hardship,” said Loebsack. “They should be able to focus on their recovery, not delays in their benefits. This bill will help our wounded servicemembers and their families and honors the sacrifices they have made for our country. We owe it to those who have put their lives on the line protecting our freedoms to ensure that they are able to quickly access the benefits they need.”

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“We must offer the brave men and women, who have put the welfare of the Nation and their comrades before their own, the best possible support upon their return from service, to ensure both their speedy recovery and future health and wellbeing,” said Thompson. “The *Recovering Service Members Disability Benefits Act* will exempt disabled service members that have qualified for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits from the program’s 5-month waiting period, which will go a long way in helping our Wounded Warriors and their families become whole again, without bureaucratic delay or undue financial distress.”

Currently, when service members are wounded in combat and sent back to the United States to recover, some are unable to keep their current job in their respective military branch or find alternative employment due to their injuries. While disabled service members are eligible to apply for SSDI benefits, the Social Security Administration Disability Trust Fund mandates a 5-month waiting period before any benefits can be provided.

H.R. 6445 amends title II of the Social Security Act to provide that the waiting period for disability insurance benefits shall not be applicable in the case of a recovering service member, which is defined as a member of the Armed Forces who is recovering from an injury or illness incurred in the line of duty in a combat zone.

The *Recovering Service Members Disability Benefits Act* does not expand eligibility for SSDI benefits or automatically approve individual requests, and all of the same protections used to prevent fraud and abuse of the program remain as defined under current law.

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