



NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER - LOUISIANA

Matthew J West

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What do I do?

- Serve as the Legislative Committee Member, which is a three-year commitment that requires the State Commander, Senior Vice and Junior Vice to agree on
- Serve as the conduit between the State of Louisiana and the Federal Government
- Coordinate visits when attending the National Legislative and Washington Conference
- Provide feedback to the Department of Louisiana on legislative updates
- Encourage members to sign up for the Action Corps Weekly
- Provide a monthly report to our legislators on Veteran related bills and request co-sponsorship (Action Corps Weekly)
- Follow Veteran related legislation as it passes through Congress (House to Senate to the Presidents Desk)
- Participate in two Conferences annually (September Legislative and March Washington Conference)
- Provide answers to questions about legislation to the Department of Louisiana VFW and its members

Senators:

Cassidy, Bill	Louisiana	Republican	II	SD-455	202-224-5824
Kennedy, John	Louisiana	Republican	III	SR-437	202-224-4623

Websites:

<https://www.cassidy.senate.gov/>

<https://www.kennedy.senate.gov/public/>



Senator Cassidy did not win his primary, so is being replaced in November.

Representatives:

1st	Scalise, Steve	R	266 CHOB	(202) 225-3015	Energy and Commerce Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis
2nd	Carter, Troy A.	D	442 CHOB	(202) 225-6636	Transportation and Infrastructure Small Business
3rd	Higgins, Clay	R	572 CHOB	(202) 225-2031	Oversight and Reform Homeland Security



Websites:

<https://scalise.house.gov/>

<https://troycarter.house.gov/>

<https://clayhiggins.house.gov/>

Representatives:

4th	Johnson, Mike	R	568 CHOB	(202) 225- 2777	Speaker of the House Judiciary
5th	Letlow, Julia	R	142 CHOB	(202) 225- 8490	Appropriations
6th	Fields, Cleo	D	2349 RHOB	(202) 225- 3901	Unknown at this time



Websites:

<https://mikejohnson.house.gov/>

<https://letlow.house.gov/>

<https://fields.house.gov/>

Representative Letlow is running for Senate, so her seat will be replaced in November
Representative Fields is not seeking reelection, so his seat will be replaced in November

Action Corps Weekly



Action Corps is one of the most important things we can be a part of, while being a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. If you are not currently signed up for it, it is too easy. Ensure your members know this as well.

Got vfw.org website (National website), move your mouse over the Advocacy tab, as seen below.



When you hover over Advocacy, you will see Grassroots directly below, click that. It will take you here.

Action Corps Weekly



ne / Advocacy

Grassroots Efforts

The VFW **Action Corps** is our national grassroots advocacy network comprised of more than 300,000 VFW members and patriotic supporters of veterans. This group stays up-to-date on the issues facing our veterans, our military and their families, standing ready to email, write, call and visit our nation's lawmakers to make their voices heard. The VFW Action Corps is free and open to all patriotic Americans who care about the military and veterans' communities.

[Join the VFW Action Corps today](#) and add your voice to the thousands of veterans' advocates making a difference every day, and if you're already a member of the VFW Action Corps, encourage your friends and neighbors to join the effort!

Participants receive:

- The VFW Action Corps Weekly, an easy-to-read electronic newsletter that highlights the VFW's advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill.
- Immediate access to a nationwide database of contact information for all elected officials, a congressional directory.
- Regular VFW "Action Alerts" on how to get involved when our nation's veterans, service members and their families need their voices heard on Capitol Hill.

The VFW Action Corps is what gives the VFW its strength in advocating for our nation's heroes. Working hand-in-hand with the VFW's National Legislative Service -- whose office is in eye-shot of the Capitol dome in Washington -- members of the VFW Action Corps are armed with all of the tools and information they need to help the VFW in its mission to support our nation's veterans.



Simply Click on the Action Corps Weekly Button, which will open a new tab. Fill out 3 easy tabs.

Action Corps Weekly



Enter Your Info

Country

United States

Continue



You will receive the Action Corps Weekly, every Monday, minus holidays, then they come out on Tuesday.

Action Corps Weekly Action Alert



TAKE ACTION

[Click Here](#)

Include the Major Richard Star Act in the FY23 NDAA

Background

Our nation's combat disabled veterans are being denied full access to their hard-earned benefits. Over 50,000 medically retired veterans—many of whom are Purple Heart recipients—are forbidden from receiving their full retirement pay and disability compensation. The VFW firmly believes that Department of Defense retired pay and Department of Veterans Affairs service-connected disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits, earned for different reasons, yet Congress has failed to acknowledge and act on this long-standing injustice.

The VFW demands that Congress includes the *Major Richard Star Act* as an amendment in the *National Defense Authorization Act of 2023*.

Take Action

Time is of the essence, so you must contact your members of Congress [today](#) and tell them to support the *Major Richard Star Act* as an amendment in the *National Defense Authorization Act of 2023*. Purple Heart recipients have already waited too long for their earned benefits!

TAKE ACTION

[CLICK HERE](#)



National Legislative Committee Member

Matthew West



The Taking Care of America's Veterans Act (TCAVA) vs Major Richard Star Act

Background: Congress is considering the Take Care of America's Veterans Act, a legislative package containing several provisions intended to improve programs and services for veterans. The VFW supports efforts to strengthen care, benefits, and services for veterans. However, the legislation would pay for some of those improvements by codifying previously proposed reductions to disability compensation for veterans with service-connected tinnitus and obstructive sleep apnea. According to VA estimates, these changes could reduce disability compensation payments by approximately \$57 billion over ten years and affect up to 1.5 million veterans. The VFW believes Congress can strengthen veterans; programs without reducing earned disability compensation benefits.

It was postponed due to the closeness of the VOTE, so what we are doing is working!

Why This Matters: This is not simply a debate about two medical conditions. It is about whether Congress should use veterans' disability compensation as a funding source for other priorities. Disability compensation is not a government handout. It is compensation for injuries and illnesses connected to military service. Veterans earned these benefits through their service and sacrifice. According to **VA estimates**, the proposed rating changes could reduce disability compensation payments by approximately \$57 billion over ten years and affect up to 1.5 million veterans. If Congress can reduce one group of veterans earned benefits to pay for new programs today, what benefits will be targeted tomorrow? The VFW believes veterans should not be forced to choose between protecting earned disability compensation and supporting improvements to veterans' programs. Congress can strengthen veterans' services without asking disabled veterans to bear the cost. Veterans honored their commitment to our nation. Congress should honor its commitment to veterans.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF:



“The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) strongly opposes the Take Care of America’s Veterans Act as currently drafted because it asks future disabled veterans to bear the cost of expanding benefits through changing the VA rating schedule for tinnitus and obstructive sleep apnea — common conditions associated with combat poly trauma.

The VFW has long maintained that veterans; benefits are an earned obligation of the nation, a promise made through the military service contract, and should not be financed through offsets, fee increases, or reductions that place additional burdens on veterans, military families, and survivors. Congress should Honor the Contract and strengthen veterans; programs without creating new costs for those who sacrifice in service to our country. A grateful nation pays its debts to veterans — it does not send them the invoice.” — Carol Whitmore, VFW National Commander-in-Chief

LET'S BE CLEAR!



The VFW Supports most of this bill. It has a bunch of stuff we have been asking and working on for the past several years.

Our issue is simple, Section 108. REFORMS RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY RATINGS.

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall revise the schedule for rating disabilities adopted and applied under section 1155 of title 38, United States Code, as follows:

(A) A grade of disability of 0 percent shall be assigned for sleep apnea syndrome when the syndrome is **asymptomatic, with or without treatment.**

(B) A grade of disability of 10 percent shall be assigned for sleep apnea syndrome when **treatment yields incomplete relief.**

(C) A grade of disability of 50 percent shall be assigned for sleep apnea syndrome only if—

(i) treatment is either ineffective or the veteran is unable to use the prescribed treatment **due to comorbid conditions**; and

(ii) there is no end-organ damage.

(D) A grade of disability of 100 percent shall be assigned for sleep apnea syndrome only if there is **also end-organ damage.**

LET'S BE CLEAR!



(2) QUALIFYING COMORBID CONDITIONS.— For purposes of paragraph (1)(C)(i), a comorbid condition is a condition that, in the opinion of a qualified medical provider, directly impedes or prevents the use of, or implementation of, a recognized form of treatment intervention normally shown to be effective.

(b) RATINGS FOR TINNITUS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall revise the schedule for rating disabilities adopted and applied under section 1155 of title 38, United States Code, as follows:

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), tinnitus may not be assigned a separate compensable disability rating.

(2) A grade of disability of 10 percent shall be assigned for tinnitus only when tinnitus is diagnosed as associated with service-connected (as defined in section 101(16) of title 38, United States Code) hearing loss that is otherwise non-compensable under the laws administered by the Secretary.



Caption: When Americans volunteer to serve, they accept extraordinary risks in defense of our nation. In return, America makes a promise. Veterans' benefits are not charity. They are earned through service and sacrifice. A grateful nation pays its debts to veterans. It does not send them the invoice. Tell Congress to Honor the Contract.

Take action today: <https://votervoice.net/VFW/Campaigns/138035/Respond>

Hashtags: #HonorTheContract #VFW #Veterans #KeepThePromise
#VeteransBenefits #MilitaryFamilies #ServiceAndSacrifice #VeteranAdvocacy

WHO PAYS THE PRICE?

Up to 1.5 Million Veterans Affected.

\$57 Billion in Reduced Compensation.

Based on VA Estimates



Take Action Today

Caption: Congress is considering legislation that would expand some veterans' programs by changing disability ratings for tinnitus and obstructive sleep apnea. According to VA estimates, those changes could affect up to 1.5 million veterans and reduce disability compensation by approximately \$57 billion over the next 10 years. Veterans should not pay for veterans' benefits. Tell Congress to Honor the Contract and protect earned disability compensation.

Take action today:

<https://votervoice.net/VFW/Campaigns/138035/Respond>

Veterans Kept Their Promise. Congress Must Keep Its Promise.



Take Action Today

Caption: Veterans kept their promise to this nation. Now Congress must keep its promise to veterans.

The VFW opposes efforts to fund veterans' programs by reducing earned disability compensation for future disabled veterans. Congress can strengthen veterans' programs without making veterans pay the price. Join us and tell Congress to Honor the Contract.

Take action today: <https://votervoice.net/VFW/Campaigns/138035/Respond>

Hashtags: #HonorTheContract #VFW #Veterans #VeteranAdvocacy
#ProtectVeteransBenefits #KeepThePromise #MilitaryCommunity #TakeAction