

## Rep. Pearce's Stance on 109th Congress Veterans' Legislation

### BILLS SUPPORTED BY REP. PEARCE

Bill Number	Current Status	Legislative Description (As drawn from text of legislation, committee summaries, and/or other outside sources)	Justification
<u>H.R. 6036</u> <i>HEALTHY Vets Act</i>	Introduced 9/6/06 Referred to VA Committee	Allows the VA Secretary to contract with local doctors and hospitals to provide medical services for those veterans who live far away from VA medical facilities.	<b>Sponsor</b>
<u>H.R.1741</u> <i>Rural Veterans Access to Care Act</i>	Introduced 4/20/05 No Action Cosponsors: 28	Creates a pilot program in three geographic service regions where medical services shall be provided by non-VA providers for acute or chronic symptom management, non-therapeutic medical services, and other medical services as determined by the director of the appropriate geographic service region.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R.4277</u> <i>Veterans' Access to Local Health Care Options and Resources Act</i>	Introduced 11/9/05 No Action Cosponsors: 4	Allows a veteran enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs annual patient enrollment system to elect to receive covered health services through a non-Department facility.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R. 5081</u> <i>Military Spouses Employment Act</i>	Introduced 4/4/06 - No Action Cosponsors: 121	Amends the Internal Revenue Code to include spouses of members of the Armed Forces on extended active duty (more than 90 days or for an indefinite period) as members of a targeted group for purposes of the work opportunity tax credit.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>HR 1635</u> <i>VETS Act</i>	Introduced 4/14/05 – No Action Cosponsors: 20	Amends the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax for hiring military service personnel who served in a combat zone or a hazardous duty area.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R 4882</u> <i>Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center</i>	Passed House 3/28/06 –Awaiting action in Senate Cosponsors: 6	To ensure the proper remembrance of Vietnam veterans and the Vietnam War by designating a site for a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.	<b>An Original Co-Sponsor</b>

<i>Enforcement Act</i>			
<u>H.R. 292</u> <i>Military Death Benefit Improvement Act of 2005</i>	Introduced 1/20/05 – No Action Cosponsors: 243	Increases from \$12,000 to \$100,000 the death gratuity payable to the survivors of members of the Armed Forces who die while on active duty or inactive duty training. Increases eligible within 120 days after discharge or release from such duty or training, if the death resulted from an injury or disease incurred or aggravated during such duty or training.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R. 994</u>	Introduced 3/1/05 – Passed Govt Reform 6/16/05 – Awaiting HASC Action Cosponsors: 325	Supported this in the 108th Congress; Would allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R. 3478</u> <i>Fallen Military Heroes Savings Act</i>	Introduced 7/27/05 – No Action Cosponsors: 98	Specifically, H.R. 3478 would do the following when applied to the military death gratuity: Waive the cap of \$4,000 for annual contribution to a Roth IRA; Waive the cap of \$5,250 for annual contribution to a Health Savings Account; Waive the cap of 75% of the deductible for contribution into an Archer MSA; Waive the cap of \$2,000 for annual contribution for Coverdell Education Accounts.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R. 5444</u> <i>The Veterans Disability Automatic COLA Act</i>	Introduced 5/22/06 No Action Cosponsors: 19	HR 5444 will provide annual cost-of-living increases automatically each year to the rates of disability dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>

<u>H.R. 4264</u> <i>The Veterans Outreach Improvement Act</i>	Introduced 11/9/05 No Action Cosponsors: 8	HR 4264 allows the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer grants to programs that reach out to veterans ensuring they receive the benefits for which they are eligible.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R.1352</u> <i>Veterans Employment and Respect Act</i>	Introduced 3/16/05 No Action Cosponsors: 164	Veterans Employment and Respect Act of 2005 - Amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow employers a work opportunity tax credit for hiring certain: (1) veterans of military service in Afghanistan or Iraq; and (2) dependents of deceased members of the Armed Forces who served in Afghanistan and Iraq.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R.2088</u> <i>Veterans' Heritage Firearms Act</i>	Introduced 5/4/05 No Action Cosponsors: 110	<p>Veterans' Heritage Firearms Act of 2005 - Provides a 90-day amnesty period during which veterans and their family members can register in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record any firearm acquired before October 31, 1968, by a veteran while a member of the armed forces stationed outside the continental United States. Grants such an individual limited immunity under the Federal criminal code and the Internal Revenue Code with respect to the acquisition, possession, transportation, or alteration of such firearm before or concurrent with such registration. Extends such immunity to a veteran who attempts to register a qualifying firearm outside of the amnesty period if the veteran surrenders the firearm within 30 days after being notified of potential criminal liability for continued possession.</p> <p>Requires the Attorney General to: (1) transfer each firearm qualifying as a curio or relic which has been forfeited to the United States to the first qualified museum that requests it; and (2) publish information identifying each such firearm which is available to be transferred to a museum. Prohibits the Attorney General from destroying any such firearm which has been forfeited until five years after the forfeiture. Requires that any firearm transferred to a qualified museum be registered to the</p>	<b>An Original Co-Sponsor</b>

		<p>transferee.</p> <p>Makes a prohibition against transfer or possession of a machine-gun inapplicable to a transfer to or by, or possession by, a museum which is open to the public and incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation under applicable State law.</p>	
<p><u>H.R.4264</u> <i>Veteran's Outreach Improvement Act</i></p>	<p>Introduced 11/9/05 No Action Cosponsors: 22</p>	<p>Veterans Outreach Improvement Act of 2005 - Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish, maintain, and modify as necessary procedures for ensuring the effective coordination of outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs between and among the Office of the Secretary, the Office of Public Affairs, the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration.</p> <p>Directs the Secretary to ensure that state and local outreach assistance is provided in locations that: (1) have relatively large concentrations of veterans; or (2) are experiencing growth in veteran populations. Authorizes the Secretary to make grants to state veterans agencies for state and local outreach services.</p>	<p><b>Currently a Cosponsor</b></p>
<p><u>H.R.5444</u> <i>Veterans' Disability Compensation Automatic COLA Act</i></p>	<p>Introduced 5/22/06 No Action Cosponsors: 25</p>	<p>Veterans' Disability Compensation Automatic COLA Act - Requires that, whenever there is an increase in benefit amounts payable under title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) of the Social Security Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase by the same percentage the amounts payable as veterans' disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled adult children, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children.</p>	<p><b>Currently a Cosponsor</b></p>
<p><u>H.R.5520</u> <i>Veterans Identity Protection Act</i></p>	<p>Introduced 5/25/06 No Action Cosponsors: 122</p>	<p>To establish the Office of Veterans Identity Protection Claims to reimburse injured persons for injuries suffered as a result of the unauthorized use, disclosure, or dissemination of identifying information stolen from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.</p>	<p><b>Currently a Cosponsor</b></p>

<u>H.R.5862</u> <i>To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals eligible for veterans health benefits to contribute to health savings accounts</i>	Introduced 7/24/06 No Action Cosponsors: 14	Allows individuals eligible for veterans' health benefits to contribute to health savings accounts.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.R.5743</u> <i>HSA Improvement and Expansion Act</i>	Introduced 6/29/05 No Action Cosponsors: 5	Allows individuals eligible for veterans' health benefits to contribute to health savings accounts. Makes a broad range of other improvements to HSAs to make them more attractive to consumers and employers.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.CON.RES.339</u>	Introduced 2/14/06 No Action Cosponsors: 44	Recognizes: (1) the importance of military recruiting in ensuring national security; and (2) the essential role of U.S. Armed Forces in protecting the nation and providing valuable resources and life experiences for future leaders.  Condemns: (1) municipal and university actions which defy federal statutes regarding military recruiters, including recruiter access provisions; and (2) those who denigrate military service as less significant or valuable than higher education.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.CON.RES.354</u>	Introduced 3/8/06 No Action Cosponsors: 20	Expresses continued support for conditioning an institution of higher education's receipt of certain federal funds on its providing military recruiters with the same access to its campus and students as it provides to any other employer.	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>
<u>H.CON.RES.125</u>	Introduced 4/6/05 Referred to the Committee on Veteran's Affairs. Cosponsors: 69	Recognizes the importance of the men and women who have served or who currently serve in the Armed Forces of the United States.  Supports the designation of an appropriate week as Hire a Veteran	<b>Currently a Cosponsor</b>

		<p>Week.</p> <p>Encourages the President to issue a proclamation calling upon employers, labor organizations, veterans service organizations, and Federal, State, and local governmental agencies to lend their support to increase employment of the men and women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.</p>	
<u>H.RES.119</u>	<p>Introduced 2/17/05 Passed House 3/9/05 Cosponsors: 109</p>	<p>Recognizes the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima.</p> <p>Recognizes and commends the members of the U.S. Marine Corps and other U.S. Armed Forces who participated in such Battle, especially those who gave their lives there.</p>	<b>An Original Co-Sponsor</b>

**OTHER PENDING VETERANS LEGISLATION**

Bill Number	Current Status	Legislative Description	Justification
<p>H.R. 4949 Rep. Chet Edwards</p>	<p>Introduced 3/14/06 – No action Cosponsors: 158</p>	<p>Prohibits an increase after December 31, 2005, in: (1) a premium, deductible, co-payment, or other charge prescribed by the Secretary of Defense for medical and dental health care coverage for military personnel; and (2) the dollar amount of a cost-sharing requirement under the DOD pharmacy benefits program.</p> <p>Prohibits: (1) charges for DOD inpatient care from exceeding \$535 per day; and (2) after December 31, 2005, an increase in premiums under TRICARE (a DOD managed health care program) for certain members of the Selected Reserve.</p>	<p><b>Not currently a Cosponsor:</b> Addressed for Fiscal Year 2007: The FY 2007 Defense Authorization bill that passed the House on May 11, 2006 included a provision blocking the Department of Defense from raising TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Standard fees. In addition, the bill zeroes out co-pays for generic and formulary mail order prescriptions for military beneficiaries.</p> <p>This one-year halt on increases will allow Congress more time to examine the issues facing Veterans in the TRICARE program. Seniors, Medicare and Medicaid recipients as well as those who receive private insurance face increases in increased premiums, deductibles, co-payments and other charges. Should veterans in TRICARE be permanently exempt from cost increase? Is that the best policy for America, or should we work to make all Health Care more cost effective and more efficient?</p>
<p><u>H.R. 2076</u> Sponsor: Rep. Michael <i>Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2005</i></p>	<p>Introduced 5/4/05 – No Action Co-Sponsors: 25</p>	<p>Allows the receipt of both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation with respect to any service-connected disability (currently, only a disability rated at 50 percent or more).</p>	<p><b>Not currently a Cosponsor:</b> Congress already addressed concurrent receipts. The statutory prohibition on concurrent receipt has been in effect since 1891. By endorsing incremental policy changes, the Republicans Congress is the first in over 100 years to support comprehensive reform of the concurrent receipt issue.</p>

Bill Number	Current Status	Legislative Description	Justification
<u>H.R. 1366</u> Sponsor: Rep. Michael Bilirakis <i>Combat-Related Special Compensation Act of 2005</i>	Introduced 3/17/05 No Action Co-Sponsors: 37	This bill would extend eligibility for Combat-Related Special Compensation to service members who are medically retired for combat- or operations-related conditions before attaining 20 years of service. Currently, these members must forfeit \$1 of their military retired pay for each \$1 they receive in VA disability compensation. This legislation would ensure they receive the retired pay they earned by service by exempting from this dollar-for-dollar offset an amount of retired pay equal to 2.5% of their highest 3-year average basic pay times their years of service. For example, it would ensure a member who is disability retired for combat wounds with 15 years of service receives at least 37.5% of high-3 average basic pay from the Defense Department in addition to his or her VA disability compensation.	<b>Not currently a Cosponsor:</b> There is no cost estimate for the legislation right now. However, such a proposal could likely be very costly in the end.
<u>H.R. 968</u> Sponsor: Rep. Jim Saxton	Introduced 2/17/05 – No Action Cosponsors: 139	To amend title 10, United States Code, to change the effective date for paid-up coverage under the military Survivor Benefit Plan from October 1, 2008, to October 1, 2006 at a cost of \$289,000,000.	<b>Not currently a Cosponsor:</b> The 108th Congress made notable strides to address the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) social security offset period. Public law 108-375 included a phase-in to eliminate the social security offset and restore the SBP, over 4½ years, to 55% of the base pay. In a world where we must balance a tight federal budget against the fiscal realities of reform, it isn't always possible to make massive changes in a single year, but instead phase in those changes over time.



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<u>H.R. 808</u> Sponsor: Rep. Henry Brown <i>Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act</i>	Introduced 2/15/05 No Action Co-Sponsors: 199 Discharge Petition filed by Rep. Chet Edwards on 11/16/06 H.Res. 271	This bill will repeal certain provisions that require the offset of amounts paid in Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities for the surviving spouses of former military personnel who are entitled to military pay or who would be entitled to retired pay except for being under 60 years of age.	<b>Not currently a Cosponsor:</b> No CBO score available, estimates range from \$500 million to more than \$1 billion per year.
<u>H.R. 4992</u> Sponsor: Rep. Sue Kelly <i>Veterans Medicare Assistance Act of 2006</i>	Introduced 3/16/06 – No Action Co-Sponsors: 6	To provide for Medicare reimbursement for health care services provided to Medicare-eligible veterans in facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.	<b>Not currently a Cosponsor:</b> This bill would make America's Veterans Administration Hospitals Medicare providers, heaping upon our burdened VA system more cases and more regulations. At a time when Congress is working to allow more Veterans options away from the VA hospital system is it prudent to put Medicare eligible veterans back into the system.
<u>H.R. 2369</u> Sponsor: Rep. Bob Filner <i>Honor Our Fallen Prisoners of War Act</i>	Introduced 5/16/05 – No Action Co-Sponsors: 211	Requires the Secretary concerned to award the Purple Heart to members of the Armed Forces who die in captivity under circumstances not otherwise establishing eligibility for the Purple Heart.	<b>Not currently a Cosponsor:</b> Military awards and medals cannot and should not be automatically given to someone based on their status but their service. Some who die in prison could be unworthy for award. Further study is needed to ensure tight rules are set up to ensure every recipient is worthy.