



Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust

Congressman John B. Larson

Improving Social Security is Important for Veterans

Veterans rely on Social Security:

- Military service members pay FICA, earning future retirement, survivor, and disability benefits. Seriously-injured veterans may be eligible for Social Security disability benefits.¹
- Over 9.0 million veterans received Social Security benefits in 2020.² This is more than the 5.1 million veterans who receive disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).³
- Nearly 1 in 6 adult Social Security beneficiaries are veterans.⁴

Social Security benefits help keep veterans out of poverty:

- Retired Army Sergeant Shaun Castle, now Deputy Executive Director of Paralyzed Veterans of America, was severely injured in November 2003 during an Army training accident. He was 22 years old. He testified at a House Ways and Means hearing on Social Security in 2019, stating:

“In January 2009, when I was 27 years old, I was granted Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) upon a hearing appeal after first being denied and received roughly a year’s retroactive benefits. I was not working because of my injuries and, while still technically employed, I had run through my sick leave. My only income was that \$700 a month from the VA and it would be almost another two years, in October 2010, before the VA processed my paperwork to finally get my rating up to where it was supposed to be. **When I was determined to be eligible for SSDI, I was on the verge of being homeless, running out of food, and dealing with the ramifications from a second failed spinal cord surgery that had put me into my wheelchair permanently. Being granted SSDI gave me some breathing room.** I was able to finally get into an accessible home and started to put my life back together. Had I not received SSDI when I did, I do not honestly know what I would have done and how that would have impacted where I am today.”⁵

¹ <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10017.pdf>

² <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/population-profiles/veteran-beneficiaries.html>

³ <https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/pocketcards/fy2020q4.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/population-profiles/veteran-beneficiaries.html>

⁵ https://waysandmeans.house.gov/sites/democrats.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/documents/Shاون%20Castle%20Testimony_0.pdf