

**H.R. 3833: Veterans' Caregiver Appeals Modernization  
Act of 2025  
(Rep. Barrett)**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**VETERANS' AFFAIRS**  
CHAIRMAN MIKE BOST

*Courtesy of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Majority Staff*

**BACKGROUND:**

The *Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010* [Pub. L. 111-163] (codified at 38 U.S.C. § 1720G) established at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). Through this program, eligible seriously injured veterans have the option of having a family member care for them at home, and the veteran caregivers are provided with a monthly stipend through VA. This monthly stipend is important to ensure that caregivers have the financial resources they need to provide their veteran loved one with the full-time care they need, given that caregivers put their own careers on hold to do so.

Although the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) has implemented a single electronic claims folder to house all documents submitted with respect to claims for VA disability compensation benefits, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has not done the same with respect to applications for eligibility in its caregiver program. Documents and medical records pertaining to caregiver program applications are uploaded to different electronic systems used by different parts of VHA, and those systems are different from the electronic system used by the VA Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board), which is separate from VHA and which makes final decision on caregiver program applications. Thus, the VA employees – e.g., VHA's Centralized Eligibility and Appeals Teams (CEATs), VA Medical Centers' Patient Advocates, and Board attorneys – do not see the same documents and evidence when making decisions on caregiver applications.

Veteran and caregiver advocates (e.g., the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and the Quality of Life Foundation) have reported that because VHA provides inconsistent guidance and training on PCAFC eligibility requirements, applications are often denied and veterans must file an appeal of that denial. There are two ways to appeal a denied caregiver application – through the VHA “clinical appeal” track, or through the appeal track established under the *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017* [Pub. L. 115-55] (AMA). Both tracks can place the veteran's family in line at the Board. But because the Board does not see all the same documents that the VHA decision-makers see, the Board often must “remand” – or send the case back to the VHA – to obtain what the Board believes are missing documents, resulting in unnecessary delays in a final decision on the caregiver application.

Caregivers receive monthly stipends once the caregiver program application is granted. However, the wait time for final decisions on caregiver appeals can be years, and if the veteran dies during the pendency of the appeal, the caregiver – who has been caring for the veteran full-time during the entire process – is simply denied all potential past-due caregiver stipends.

## **BILL SUMMARY:**

The *Veterans' Caregiver Appeals Modernization Act of 2025* would:

- Require VA to develop and implement a single digital system that every VHA and Board employee responsible for making decisions on caregiver program applications can access and review all documents submitted with any such application. VA would also be required to consider the lessons that VBA learned when implementing its own single electronic system for processing benefits claims.
- Clarify that caregivers may be eligible for past-due caregiver stipends if the caregiver application is eventually granted on appeal, in cases where the veteran dies during the pendency of the appeal.
- Require VA to ensure that VHA employees who make decisions on caregiver program applications receive consistent guidance and training. VA would also be required to consider the lessons that VBA learned when implementing standardized training for disability compensation claims processors.

## **THE MESSAGE:**

- The *Veterans' Caregiver Appeals Modernization Act of 2025* would streamline and improve VA's caregiver program application process so that veterans and their caregivers receive timely and correct decisions on their applications.
- The *Veterans' Caregiver Appeals Modernization Act of 2025* would ensure that the family members who put their careers on hold to care full-time for their seriously injured veteran loved ones receive the past-due financial support they have earned.
- The *Veterans' Caregiver Appeals Modernization Act of 2025* would modernize VA and cut out the red tape that has delayed veteran caregivers' eligibility for benefits for years.